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ABSTRACT

A study examined what counts as success in literacy and numeracy programs for youth at risk in Victoria. It explored the relationship between discourses around best practice in government reports and through examining academic writings, surveying providers and policymakers, and speaking with practitioners and participants. Main findings indicated success was grounded in a number of elements interacting inside and outside the literacy/numeracy classroom and showed that literacies and numeracies were embedded in the selection of successful programs; curriculum allowing for multiple pathways and flexibility in programs underpinned success for marginalized young people; programs used a range of activities to meet learners' needs; bold and innovative approaches grounded in current Australian and international brain research, and complementary and psychodynamic therapies were used in some literacy and numeracy programs; the Victorian transition system, along with its other counterparts in Australia, was among the most porous in the industrialized world, with government estimates under-representing the problem of young people under 18 years of age not in education, training, or employment; and though in its infancy, the recent government initiative to support young people in their choice of courses, the Managed Individual Pathways, was welcomed. (Appendixes include 86 references, instruments and protocols, and various indicators of good practice.) (YLB)

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ALNARC
Adult Literacy and Numeracy Australian Research Consortium

Literacy for youth

What counts as success in programs for youth at risk?

Carolyn Ovens

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An investigation by the Victorian Centre

Adult Literacy and Numeracy Australian Research Consortium

Victoria University of Technology

ALNARC National Research Program 2001-2002

June 2002

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This report is especially for them.

Executive Summary

This report examines what counts as success in literacy and numeracy programs for youth 'at risk' in Victoria. Its main purpose was to explore the relationship between discourses around 'best practice' in government reports and through examining academic writings, surveying providers and policy-makers, and speaking with practitioners and participants in Victoria.

The report suggests many of the terms in the research brief such as 'at risk', 'pedagogy' and 'approaches' are debated in youth research. The report also suggests that educational research that is disengaged from action around policy is also problematic for the literacy and numeracy field. Lack of connecting the research with administrative and local action could be contributing inadvertently to Australia's current poor performance as recorded in the 1997 Australian Bureau of Statistics reports.

The programs described in the case studies are mainly from the Adult Community Education (ACE) sector, while the web-based surveys encouraged responses from the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) sector. At the time of writing, Victoria is undertaking reform of the post-compulsory school and the vocational education and training sector. The report looks at the effects of this from those involved in the literacy and numeracy programs for young people.

Method and response

The approach taken started with a review of literature. The research method entailed developing a hybrid 'best practice' set of *literacy and numeracy for youth* indicators. In addition, the research used the draft indicators of *'good practice' in youth development* (Ausyouth, 2001) (Appendix 2 D) These formed the basis of interviews, discussion with young people and web surveys. The response for participation in the case studies was mainly from the community sector with two Technical and Further Education (TAFE) providers involved. On the other hand, the surveys on the web attracted a higher involvement of TAFE responses.

Main findings

The main findings of the research indicate that success is grounded in a number of elements interacting inside and outside the literacy / numeracy classroom and show that:

- ***Literacies and numeracies are embedded*** in the selection of successful programs
- Curriculum allowing for ***multiple pathways and flexibility in programs*** underpin success for marginalised young people
- The results of these analyses suggest that programs utilise ***a range of activities*** to meet learners' needs
- ***Bold and innovative approaches*** grounded in current Australian and international brain research, complementary and psycho-dynamic therapies are being used in some literacy and numeracy programs
- The Victorian ***transition system***, along with its other counterparts in Australia is among the most porous in the industrialised world with government estimates under-representing the problem of young people under eighteen years of age not in education training or employment
- Though in its infancy, the recent government initiative to support young people in their choice of courses, the Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs), is welcomed

The report outlines the following challenges for future policy that will:

- Reform the marketisation of the provision of transport, youth services and educational products which compromises collaboration and coordination
- Revisit the privacy legislation and investigate the impacts on information sharing around the complex needs of young people
- Recruit young teacher graduates to youth literacy and numeracy programs and reform pre-service and in-service primary and secondary teacher education courses
- Offer young people fun and engaging ways to work with administrators to communicate their concerns
- Use shorter planning cycles at the centre and three year funding to programs at the local level.

The final challenge for public education is that policy embraces current isolated successes and their underpinning principles and devise strategies for 'best practice' to offer a better transition from initial education to working life.

1. Project background

In 2001, the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Australian Research Consortium (ALNARC) was funded by the Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) to address some of the gaps in youth literacy policy and practice identified in research conducted by the Australian Council for Adult Literacy (ACAL) in 2001and by ALNARC during 1999 and 2000. ALNARC chose to involve practitioners by documenting at least six case studies of 'good practice' in the provision of literacy for disaffected or 'at risk' young people. The case studies were to be analysed to highlight pedagogical practices and approaches to literacy and numeracy learning that seem to be successful, and to ascertain why.

The project was designed not only to further literacy and numeracy research but also to utilise the work, *Adult literacy and numeracy practices 2001: a national snapshot* produced in 2001 by TAFE NSW Access Division with a project team lead by McGuirk. This provided a national snapshot of adult literacy provision using a 'best practice' framework. It took account of the changes in the vocational education and training area particularly since the introduction of literacy and numeracy training under Mutual Obligation, an initiative targeting young people.

The project also responded to the call in the report, *Life is Respect. Youth in ACE: Extending and Implementing Early Learnings. Documentation of teaching and learning attitudes, approaches and activities* (Bradshaw, 2001) commissioned by the Northern Metropolitan Adult Community and Further Education Region. This Victorian report called for a bigger project on the topic of teaching and learning in youth literacy and numeracy. The writers argued that the topic deserved greater attention to detail than the terms of reference their work allowed. The researchers indicated that such research would fill a vacuum that existed at the time.

This research also incorporated a request from the Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA), now known as Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) by the *Ausyouth Project* to consider the indicators of 'good practice' in youth development (Ausyouth, 2001; Ausyouth 2001a). *Ausyouth* sought to improve outcomes for young people through building communities of practice in the youth sector and allied fields in Australia through discussing international concepts such as 'youth development' as well as drawing on recent research into working with young at risk people (Australia, 2001a; Australia, 2001b; Australia, 2001c).

At the state level, Victoria has undertaken a complete review of post-compulsory education and, in particular, the experience of early school leavers. Three recent reports interrogate the state apparatus. They are the *Report of the Independent Review of the Quality of Training in Victoria's Apprenticeship and Traineeship System* (Schofield, May 2000), the *Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria* (Kirby, August 2000) and *Public Education: The Next Generation: Report of the Ministerial Working Party* (Connors, August 2000). Together, they address a range of flaws in the administration and quality of the transition system in Victoria, suggesting strategies to meet the challenges. A raft of reports researching youth 'at risk' of early school leaving was commissioned by the Victorian government in addition to the Ministerial Review. These are by Dwyer, Stokes, Tyler, and Holdsworth (1999), Robinson, Fleming, and Withers (1998), Ward, St Leger, Beckett and Harper (1998), King (1999). Others followed including Stokes (2000), Bradshaw, Clemans, Donovan and Macrae (2001), Brown and Holdsworth (2001), James, St Leger and Ward (2001), arising from the evaluation of the *Full Service Schools Program*, a Commonwealth program funded to 2000. The conclusions of this body of research had particular potency as the Victorian system (at the time) estimated up to 6,000 students may have been retained or attracted back into the education system as a consequence of changes to youth benefit payments by the Commonwealth.

Allied to these endeavours, this ALNARC research into youth literacy and numeracy was also commissioned to gather information for analysis from six Victorian providers offering successful programs to young people deemed to be 'at risk' of leaving the education system or becoming disengaged from their social world.

The resulting ALNARC report was to document:

- How literacy and numeracy are being incorporated or addressed in the context of a range of programs for unemployed and disaffected youth for example, programs provided by Correctional Services and programs provided in the ACE sector
- What guidelines exist for developing 'good practice' programs in this field
- How the pedagogy and curriculum (inclusive of practices, approaches and rationale) of case study programs can be best described and what we know about their learning outcomes in terms of 'good practice' in providing literacy and numeracy learning opportunities for youth.

The following report includes the case studies and their inflections around the concept of 'good practice' in literacy and numeracy provision in youth development.

2. Methodology

Initially, this project undertook an extensive literature review. Then three surveys were placed on the ALNARC website and invitations to access the surveys were sent via professional Australian and international email lists. Each reply was disidentified to maintain anonymity. One survey targeted practitioners, another, program managers and the third, researchers and policy-makers. Next, personnel from six sites providing successful youth programs were interviewed using the same survey instruments as a starting point. Each practitioner was also sent 'good practice' indicators for programs in youth development (Ausyouth, 2001) (Appendix 2D) before the interview. Often reports and other publications describing particular programs chosen by a practitioner from a particular site were also made available to the project researcher and provided insight into what counts as success. As well, young people in urban, regional and outer metropolitan settings discussed success, facilitated by a locally appointed person working with the young people.

Scope - project participants

The project gathered data from selected samples of:

- young people in nationally funded literacy and numeracy programs
- researchers of such programs
- policy-makers responsible for this area
- managers of programs with a focus on young people
- teachers and practitioners of programs for young people.

Literature Review

The literature review covered the following areas:

- theoretical frameworks that inform and support the research approach and methodology
- Australian (especially Victorian) research around early school leavers and youth 'at risk', 'good practice' and what constitutes success
- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Australian (particularly Victorian) work on the transition from initial education to working life
- bureaucratic governance of education and youth services by means of techniques such as 'good practice'
- governmentality (or the interplay of compliance and resistance) as an organising concept for what counts as success in literacy and numeracy programs and youth research
- international discussions about 'case study' as a methodology.

The literature contributed to the underpinning theoretical perspectives, the design of the surveys, the approach to the 'owning' of the case stories in the text, the reading of the selected documents from the case sites project and the choice of facilitators for the discussion groups.

Theoretical frame: 'governance'

Two social philosophers provided the basis for understanding and evaluating youth literacy and numeracy programs and for reading the data as created and presented.

A book on the development of the legitimacy of state apparatus in late capitalism, *Between Facts and Norms* (Habermas, 1992), provided an overall rationale for the research questions around young people as social actors pressing for new norms from the facts of their lived experiences. Not only does Habermas offer a frame for the struggle of young people for recognition and legitimacy, his work also provides a way of thinking about youth literacy as an emerging sector within the adult literacy field. As in the youth sector, both practitioners and participants work mutually to improve the outcomes of these systems, though from different communities of practice.

Habermas (ibid: 3-4) has developed the concept of ***communicative reason*** as the foundation for legitimacy. He maintains this is made possible by the linguistic medium through which interactions are woven together and

forms of life structured. This rationality is inscribed through mutual understanding, forming an ensemble of conditions, which both limit and enable. His translator admits that the argument is both lengthy and complex, pitched at a very abstract level. However, the first section where Habermas (ibid:1-41) outlines the theory is pertinent to our purposes. Habermas explores how the ***lifeworld*** (in this case, youth experience in Australia) is ***separated into categories by*** the establishment of ***legislation*** (private and public law of markets) and ***government bodies*** (the youth transition systems) which operate inside the forms of law. His model of claim on state resources provides for a dynamic relationship between members of parliament, the administration that interprets the legislation, and the solidarity of community actors who press the claim for resources. This ALNARC report provides a glimpse of how the "facts" of the marginalised young people's experiences, articulated through literacy and numeracy programs for youth, develop into the "norms" of legislative administration through processes of ***communicative reason***, this report being an insight into that process in both form and content.

Habermas's thesis is relevant to current events in Victoria within the state transition system and adult literacy practice. It helps gain insights into the considerable activity around major reform, where our case studies are located. His thesis shows how claims by citizens influence the law of the market place as well as administration through continuous challenges to the effectiveness of the reforms which impact on the pedagogy and working lives of youth literacy practitioners as well as on those who work in the youth sector. Young (1990) uses Habermas's theory of the critique of knowledge. He suggests that the identification of internal conflict or contradictions in a body of thought, or between the claims of a community of practitioners (literacy providers and youth workers) and their conduct, has always been regarded as an act with critical implications.

Habermas, and I might add, the personnel at case study sites, young people and survey respondents, remain confident that lawful administration can reconcile claim and counterclaim:

> Because law is just as intermeshed with money and administrative power as it is with solidarity, its own integrating achievements assimilate imperatives of diverse origin (Habermas: 40)

The second social philosopher drawn on for the approach taken in the research is Bernstein (1977: 158) whose typology of approaches framed the selected methods. According to Bernstein, the method followed in this project "place[s] the emphasis upon how social reality is constructed out of negotiated encounters with others, and [those researchers] who place the emphasis upon structural relationships". The project approach also follows Bernstein's concept of research which "need[s] to understand the everyday practices of members and the assumptions which make the daily practices of members and their assumptions, and those who set up observers' categories and observers' procedures of measurement by means of which they reconstruct the construction of members" (ibid). In approaching research through both Habermas and Bernstein's work, the case study stories used agreed text by the informants and set up anonymous surveys with open ended questions to gain ownership for the research from those most affected by the current innovations.

Theoretical frame: Youth 'at risk'

Applying Habermas more particularly to the researchers of youth in Australia produces international comparisons. Recent Australian research has found the concept of 'choice and packaging' in youth involvement over an extended period of time unique to Australia. It also outlines that social justice, rather than labelling young people's behaviour as 'at risk', is much more rewarding as a research approach. Literacy programs around issues most effecting young people provide the Habermasian resistance and critique which lays the basis for the claim on resources.

International comparisons reveal Australian transition systems to be one of the most porous, inhibiting young people from returning to complete post-compulsory school education. These sentiments are expressed in many forms; an OECD report (1997) and by Rumberger and Lamb where contrasts were made with the systems in Australia and the United States of America (USA) (1998). Sweet also compares the Australian qualification framework with those in Europe (2000). The warning of Curtain (2001) about the sustainability of the current apprenticeship system implies further claims on resources if Australia is to approach international benchmarks. The pattern approach to transition in Lamb and Mackenzie (2001) offers an understanding of the lengthy time of uncertainty for Australian young people assuming independent working lives. Further work by Lamb (2001) confirms this perspective. Malley, Frigo and Robinson (1999) suggest entrenched self-interest drives the current shape of the transition system in Australia. Fullarton (2001), Ball and Lamb (2001) warn that unless the quality of the vocational education and training (VET) experience at school, TAFE and within the workplace is improved urgently the popularity of the VET in Schools initiative will not be sustained.

A reading of youth research calling for structural reform in the transition systems at Commonwealth and State levels concludes that the term 'at risk' is limited in its relevance. 'At risk' discourses by experts are seen as dangerous. They permit surveillance of young people and prevent analysis of those processes of 'governmentality' (the Foucaldian resistance to techniques of compliance) which exacerbate the risk, allowing the state to label claim pressing or youth action as risky (Kelly, 2000). In Habermasian terms 'risk' is necessary to use communicative reason (Habermas, 1992) so that marginalised young people can make a just claim on public resources.

In addition to the literature on risk and surveillance, this ALNARC project acknowledges youth research over the past decade that indicates risk is structurally produced in the work of Batten and Russell (1995), Malley, Frigo and Robinson (1999), Ward, St Leger, Beckett and Harper (1999), Smyth, Hattam, Cannon, Edwards, Wilson and Wurst with 209 voices (2000), Brown and Holdsworth (2001), Dearn (2001), Department of Education, Training & Youth Affairs (2001b) Edgar (2001), O'Dowd, Ryan and Broadbent (2001) and Stokes (2001).

In a further elaboration of risk, Marginson (1998) suggests that the current fragmentation of youth services by contracting out government programs, undermines collaboration through mean government, market competition, enforced conformity and global manipulation. The report also derives its perspective from the work on youth commitment by Spierings (2000a, 2000b) and Turner (2001) who argue that the system can be changed through youth participation in learning that is relevant to their issues and claims.

Over all, these international studies and Australian reports warn that for Australian systems to minimise risk, profound structural reform and partnership commitment are required as a matter of urgency.

Brown and Holdsworth use the concepts of ***choice and packaging*** to describe the way young Australians view as individualistic and commodify the journey to working life (Beck cited in Brown et al, ibid: 25). These concepts also suggest there is a sense that young people are now comparatively alone in their quest to make the right decision and to navigate the complex situations facing them. Brown and Holdsworth point out that what Parsons and others have to say (cited in Brown & Holdsworth: 26), in denying structural factors at play and by emphasising choice, constitute a cruel joke for those with limited resources (Furlong & Cartmel, Wyn & White cited in Brown & Holdsworth, ibid). In Australia, Stokes and Tyler (cited in Brown & Holdsworth, ibid: 27) have pointed out that, with the implementation of the recent *Full Service Schools Program*, the diverse range of impacts on young people has been recognised in policy and program. A myriad of learning opportunities can arise for young people to resist and critique 'at-risk' discourses in health (Sissel & Drew Hohn, 1996; Colquhoun, 1997; Wyn & Stokes, 2001), employment opportunities for young people with disabilities (Turner, 2000) and recreational facilities (Rhodes & Turner, 2001).

Sercombe (1993) suggests that literacy and numeracy play a role in producing reformist possibilities:

> [T]his derives from the understanding of power as a reciprocal relation, in which the subordinated also exercise power. The more the techniques of power are exercised upon them, the more powerful they become. So, for example young people at the moment are being subjected to an extraordinary range of processes directed at disciplining, training, subjecting the individual through extended schooling and training. This training, designed to subject them and make them useful, at the same time makes young people more powerful, because the greater the discipline and skills can be turned to uses for which it was not designed – namely resistance both within school and outside it. (Sercombe,1993)

Recent debates around ***social justice*** provide a renewed look at what we now mean by literacy in the context of structured marginalisation and 'risk'. Questions are raised in some research as to the significance the shift to a literacy focus has for education as a whole. Henry and Taylor (1999:1) suggest that literacy appears to have become a surrogate for educational and social disadvantage, connecting a number of global discourses including the potentially narrow discourse of 'literacy for the knowledge economy'. For some then, the literacy approach represents a significant loss of educational capacity and government funding because it does not directly address the complex mix of social and educational ingredients that lie behind poor literacy and poor school performance.

Theoretical frame: 'Good Practice'

A search of the literature provided government reports on 'good practice'. This included the OECD work promoting corporate tools and technologies for continuous improvement within its membership. As Australia is a

member of this international organisation, it is required to report from time to time against the OECD benchmarks for international comparison.

OECD benchmarks for good transition systems as well as Australian indicators for literacy and numeracy provision and youth development were aligned by the researcher to provide guidelines for scoping the case studies and for designing the terminology used in the web-based questionnaires. A selection of indicators provided by recent reports indicated to the researcher the pervasive use of the accountability techniques in the governance of youth programs, though only recently used in adult literacy research by McGuirk and her team (NSW, 2001). A sample of these reports include:

- *OECD Review of Transition from Initial Education to Working Life Report* (1998) (Appendix 2A)
- *OECD Employment Outlook* (1999) where education and training systems indicators and active labour market systems targeting marginalised youth were listed (Appendix 2B)
- *Best Practice in Literacy and Numeracy Programs* (NSW, 2001) (Appendix 2C)
- *Good Practice in Youth Development : A framework of principles – A discussion document* (Commonwealth Minister of Youth Affairs, 2001) (Appendix 2D)
- the typology used in *Rethinking Literacy Education: The Critical Need for Practice-based Change* (Quigley, 1997: 110) (Appendix 2E)
- *Teacher Standards, Quality and Professionalism. Discussion Paper* (Australian College of Education, 2001) (Appendix 2F)
- *Reforming Schools through Innovative Teaching* (Cumming & Owen, 2001) (Appendix 2G)
- *Indicators from the Full Service Schools Program* (Department of Education, Training & Youth Affairs (DETYA), 2001) (Appendix 2H)
- *Identifying good practice in supporting youth transitions to independence* (Keys Young for Analysis and Equity Branch, DETYA, 2000) (Appendix 2I)
- indicators of good partnerships (Bradshaw, Clemans, Donovan & Macrae, 2001) (Appendix 2J)
- *More Than Just Words: Good Practice in Literacy Provision in the Koorie Vocational Context.* (Rizzetti, 1995) (Appendix 2K).

It is clear that researchers and administrators are contributing to a government drive for accountability to the OECD through such governance techniques as 'good practice'. However the ALNARC report will explore whether practitioners' concepts of 'good practice', as pedagogy through teacher self-reflection, is equivalent to what counts as 'good practice' as an administrative technology for compliance. Also, this report will consider the usefulness of the term 'good practice' as including accountability to the young people involved.

The questionnaires for personnel working in literacy provision, for researchers and policy-makers synthesised the indicators from the surveys for managers and teachers created by McGuirk and her team (NSW, 2001) (Appendix 2C) and the *youth development* indicators of 'best practice'. These were expanded by the researcher through indicators listed in a range of reports in the review of youth transition 'good practice' literature (Appendices 2 D to 2K).

Survey participants

Target respondents to the surveys came from the email and egroup lists used by ALNARC, the NationalYouth Literacy Providers Network, Youth Affairs Research Network (YARN), Youthgas, Education National (EdNa) and those who were recorded as providers of youth programs in ACE in Victoria (Bradshaw, 2001). Posting an invitation to the egroups with information about the project allowed interested participants to access the ALNARC page. Loading the surveys on the web gave a means to disidentify responses and provided anonymity for those who wished to make controversial comments.

Reliability of the data

The limitation of web surveys resulting in disidentified data collection means that there is no way of checking the authenticity of the respondents. Their background in youth literacy and numeracy programs and their engagement has to be taken in good faith.

Survey design

Three surveys were designed to gain information about youth literacy and numeracy providers as well as about researchers and policy makers as a distinct group within the adult literacy and numeracy communities of practice (Appendix 1). It developed a format based on that used by McGuirk and the team in 2000 in the NSW "Snapshot" project targeting adult literacy provision. 'Good practice' in management of youth literacy programs as well as in program development and delivery were surveyed through directing the research instruments to managers and teachers/practitioners.

Using the web in the design of the survey provided the researcher with an understanding of whether the youth literacy and numeracy field uses these resources to network and gain access to information. By identifying "youth literacy" on the *google* search engine, a practitioner, manager or researcher / policy maker would have been linked to the survey information page on the ALNARC website. As "Youth Literacy" was the first site identified by *google*, participants would have gone straight to the survey. As the survey was on the web for two weeks, this provided data on the number and kinds of practitioners / researchers who access these media and found it suitable for their professional development and networking. All the case study participants were encouraged to scan the surveys on the website to scan before the interview with the researcher. The particular aspects of each of the surveys now follow.

The teachers' / practitioners' survey

The practitioners' survey consisted of eleven parts beginning with a profiling of their employment relationship and their location. The practitioners were required to rate aspects of their program including timing, planning, resources and teachers, before responding to a number of open questions. (See Appendix 1: A Practitioner's View).

The managers' survey

This survey consisted of nine parts (See Appendix 1: A Manager's View). This survey particularly sought information about particular aspects of management, evaluation and networks.

The researchers' / policymakers' survey

This survey consisted of six parts again beginning with employment relationship and location. (See Appendix 1: A Policy Maker's / Researcher's View). Policymakers and researchers were asked to rate 'success' factors as well as to comment on networks and any other key issues.

Web Survey data

All the surveys were posted on the web in the week beginning 25 February, 2002 with the responses required by 8 March, 2002.

Survey response

The response to the survey was as follows:

Area in Youth Literacy	Number of "hits"	Number of attempts	Number of completes
Practitioner	137	18	8
Manager	64	13	8
Researcher / policymaker	71	3	1

Table 1: Survey response

Reliability of the survey data

The reliability of the data was affected by:

- the low level of response to the surveys
- the completion rate

Analysis of the survey data

Responses to questions with qualitative data were recorded.

Practitioners

Practitioners of youth programs, once they hit on the survey, were very reticent to engage in the concepts of 'good practice'. Less than 10% of the 'hits' attempted the survey and about only half of these responses took the opportunity to comment in the text boxes provided. Very few responses took the opportunity to raise controversial issues when anonymity was assured.

Managers

In the case of the managers of youth literacy and numeracy programs, very few responses were comprehensive enough to record in full. Some questionnaire responses used acronyms and unknown names further minimising the data's usefulness. In one instance, the funding sources were not Australian, so it was inferred that the survey had been completed in North America. One respondent called the researcher, expressing great concern that, even though she read widely and contributed to an active network, she found the thinking behind the surveys very confronting. This was not the intention of the surveys but may explain the reticence of people to complete.

Policymakers and researchers

The response from policy makers and researchers around provision of literacy and numeracy programs for young people was extremely low, with only 2% of 'hits' responding to the survey. Only one response took the opportunity to comment on controversial issues related to youth literacy and numeracy policy.

Data from case study structured interviews and document interpretation

The eleven structured interviews over six sites were conducted after consent had been given based on information forwarded to providers offering programs providing success for young people. Participants could refuse to answer questions thought to be of no relevance. They could highlight areas of importance in their programs. These interviews were conducted mostly by telephone and were no longer than 45 minutes duration. Some participants requested face to face interviews that were then organised. Participants were encouraged to tell their stories but were asked to highlight areas specified in the practitioner survey as well. The indicators of 'good practice' for youth development (see Appendix 2D) were sent to the participants prior to the interview to gauge the relevance to their programs. Participants were asked to send relevant reports of their programs and curriculum to the researcher before the interviews took place. The interview was therefore underpinned by the provision of documents by the practitioners expanding and exemplifying their opinions. There was no payment for the data provided for or through the interview.

Reliability of the case study data

The limitation of case studies through structured interview and review of reports and curriculum documents is widely acknowledged (Stake, 1995; Shulman, 1996; Soy, 1997). Participants reviewed a printed account of the interviews, including the researcher's findings. Each participant requested changes to the text before providing approval for inclusion in the report.

As noted by recent research in government programs (Brown & Holdsworth, 2001; Stokes, 2000), open tendering for contracts in education, training and youth services limits the extent of critical comments of documents and opinions such as the ones which form the basis of the data collection for this report. Employment arrangements for respondents also impact on their willingness to be involved and how critical they are willing to be. The anonymity of the web survey was a strategy intended to minimise this for those who felt inhibited in person.

Case study data analysis

Information from the interviews and the documents provided by the participants were analysed within the expanded youth 'best practice' framework of *Adult literacy and numeracy practices 2001: a national snapshot* (NSW, 2001) (See Appendix 2C). This interpretation was then checked with the participants. Changes were made to the text to meet their approval. The final analysis is presented in the 'case studies' chapter.

Focus groups' data

The four focus group discussions were conducted in four locations throughout Victoria – metropolitan, outer metropolitan and regional. Young people, or their parents or guardians if the participant was under eighteen years of age, provided informed consent to participate in the group. A young facilitator using protocols for

providing a safe environment encouraged young people to discuss their successes in the literacy programs (See Appendix 3). Participants were not paid but were provided with their choice of food to share during the discussion. Their agreed summary of the discussion was posted on butcher's paper. Responses were as follows:

Metropolitan

One metropolitan focus group was conducted with very young people, most were under eighteen years of age. They were very clear about what would constitute success for them.

Another metropolitan focus group was conducted in outer Melbourne with a range of older young people and the directors of Freedom Team Foundation, a community based philanthropic organisation established to support young people with educational needs and literacy difficulties at present or in the past. Individuals came from metropolitan Melbourne from the inner west to north-east though individual members had also lived in regional Victoria. The group ranged in age from nineteen to twenty-six years of age. All participants were engaged in businesses, as sole operators or as a team. They had come together through active networks, some through their involvement in a small business course accessed with government assistance.

Outer metropolitan

An outer metropolitan focus group was conducted with ten young people, two of whom were younger than eighteen years of age. All had enrolled in literacy and numeracy programs on leaving secondary schools in the district. They travelled in from rural townships and attended the community centre on a full time basis.

Regional

The regional focus group was conducted with a range of young people, four of whom were aged under eighteen years. Some were still attending school in alternative programs and supported either in school or through after school programs. Others were attending TAFE, colleges and secondary schools offering an adult learning environment combining full-time and casual employment.

Reliability of focus groups' data

The limitation of focus groups in youth research has been documented based on the concept of 'governmentality' (Harrison, 2000). This suggests that group facilitators may dominate the discourses in the group, thus reinforcing traditional beliefs, preventing young people from communicating the meaning they derive from their experiences. Stokes (2000), undertaking research with marginalised young people in Victoria, also raised issues about the reliability of data collection using focus groups. She stated that the discussion in the focus groups might expose young people to ridicule outside the session, thus being very superficial and not reflecting an authentic engagement with the issues. Practitioners have also noted that the temperaments and personalities of some marginalised young people often prevent them from active participation in discussion groups. In an attempt to minimise aspects which would make the data unreliable, protocols were set up (See Appendix 3). They were also established to minimise harm to the participants and limit the need for embellishing the truth or remaining silent.

Focus groups' data analysis

The agreed information derived from all the discussions was aligned with Australian indicators of 'best practice' management and pedagogies for adult literacy and numeracy (NSW, 2001) (See Appendix 2C). This made possible an evaluation of the relevance to young people of the techniques identified by the literacy programs as 'best practice' to the young people's perception of success.

3. Case Studies in Success

Introduction

Six case study sites involving eleven interviews and four focus groups engaged with the research questions. The personnel from the case sites were willing to share their expertise around what counts as success. Their analysis of the issues and the increasing difficulty in working with marginalised young people make their stories and the time they have given to assist this research all the more precious.

The reader will note that each site speaks with a different voice. This has arisen because the text, selected for the report, was approved in each case by the participants. At the end of each story summaries around themes of location, program, educational approaches, recruitment and evaluation are provided. The stories provided a way to gauge whether the guidelines selected to frame the research had relevance in the youth literacy and numeracy programs in the selected sites and whether the personnel saw the youth development field as appropriate for their programs. The stories touched on curriculum as well as practices, approaches and rationale. These areas are outlined to introduce the sites.

Guidelines for case studies

Guidelines in the form of 'good practice' indicators were sent to the case study participants. Indicators for 'good practice' have been developed over the past decade in the research field of youth and education from Batten and Russell (1995) to Keys Young (1999). Recently a discussion paper in youth development (Ausyouth, 2001a, 2001b) provides three lists for policy, organization and program levels. The lists of 'good practice' for program and organization were sent to practitioners at case study sites before the interviews to seek opinions on their relevance for youth literacy programs during the course of the interview (See Appendix 2D). The youth development good practice indicators (Ausyouth, 2001) were regarded by one case study site as being useful for adaptation. Their core business had been substantially expanded since Commonwealth initiatives had been put in place and the indictators appeared to reflect the needs of an organization orienting to a younger client group.

In the interviews, case study participants were asked to respond to the indicators for best practice developed by McGuirk and her team during their project in 2000 (NSW, 2001). They were also asked to evaluate whether the indicators of good practice in youth development had relevance to their programs.

In general, rather than align their programs to these measures of good practice, participants preferred to tell their story. The concerns in their programs were of a nature that made for an organic response to multi-dimensional impacts on young people's lives that affect their learning and participation in the programs. Most practitioners and managers in the case studies were unaware of tools such as 'good practice indicators' available to the field. They used their local networks of other teachers and providers as well as formal professional development activities to improve their programs and the relevance of class activities. Most educationalists, however used their gut feelings, the young people's interest and their previous teaching or work experience to inform their work.

Pedagogy, curriculum and the learning outcomes

Case programs broadly offered programs that mapped into existing curriculum respected and substantially well known in the adult literacy field. A curriculum framework for further education, *Transforming Lives: Transforming Communities,* was also used and is well established as suitable for the kinds of journeys young people need to take in establishing their lives within that of the community. In one instance a school as partner in the JPP network was piloting the *Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning* (VCAL). This school was also offering an alternative curriculum through sourcing additional funds into the school program while partnerships continued to attract resources outside recurrent funding.

The curriculum used widely in the case sites was the CGEA as it provided the flexibility to orient a young person to job seeking, VET or VCE depending on the young person's goals. Some practitioners took into consideration that it was a curriculum geared for adult learners and therefore had to be substantially value added by the practitioner to relate the individual young person's experience with the learning outcomes.

Pedagogy offered by case sites was dependent on the needs of the young people attending the centres as well as by public policy propelling funding models and client demand. Coordinators recruited teachers with experience and qualifications reflecting the overall balance of skills required. They suggest that for the young people who

are really struggling, a teacher with a primary background can better develop word attack strategies with the young people (Levels 1 and 2 on the National Reporting System (NRS)). Young people whose initial assessment places them at levels 3 to 4 are served better by matching them with a teacher with a secondary background. Often young people with high needs require individual tuition as many of these clients have failed in classes in the past.

Practices, approaches and rationale

The cases researched and the groups, directed to, by practitioners at case sites provided practices, approaches and rationales for their particular inflection of youth literacy and numeracy provision. These ranged from really exploratory and new therapies informed by the most recent brain research to those which demonstrated the very best traditional classroom pedagogies, designed to reassure learners that their views that learning takes place through conventional school structures were not disabused. In one case, innovation with older marginalised young people has emerged around the establishment of a philanthropic foundation whose structure encourages commitment and enterprise on the part of participants. It enables them to create their own businesses in retail and community service and to give back to the foundation from the profits of their work.

Case One – The Door is Always Open

Case Study One is from regional Victoria and is funded by the Commonwealth to support young people in pathways from school. It serves a vast region, 30% of the State. It is well documented as a Jobs Pathway Programme (JPP) (Kellock & Bruce, 2000a: 17 – 20) where 'good practice' in terms of the JPP as a whole, is identified and benchmarks described, but not specifically with regard to the embedded literacy programs. The program offers a range of support including literacy and numeracy programs that ensure young people continue on in school. The learners often combine school subjects with employment, training and job search. Kelloch and Bruce did not explore benchmarks for literacy and numeracy within this particular JPP even though the issue was raised as important by the manager of Case Study One in their report (ibid: 47 – 48). Consequently, it is this area to which special attention is made in our research.

The case study organisation has offered JPP for over five years accumulating good will and collaborative action to ensure the sustainability of this service. It reaches its clientele predominantly through word of mouth and works with groups of marginalised school children and their families. Many are often ineligible under Commonwealth and State government guidelines (Dearn, 2001) but are welcomed because of the philosophy of the program that does not turn anyone away. This program is maturing in its service and its capacity to infuse innovation and experimentation into its focus on the individual needs of marginalised young people. Thousands of young people have used this particular JPP program with many continuing to seek assistance (often years after they have initially been supported) with regards to employment and further training advice. Due to the connectedness that young people experience with this JPP, in many cases there is never a final farewell from this Centre.

Funding is often insufficient to meet the diverse and individual needs of young people, particularly the lack of appropriate resources within the community needed for linkages and support mechanisms. Support in this Centre, however, is offered, no matter what the cost, be it financial or staff resources. Staff are totally committed to marginalised young people in the region. The team has been hand picked to include an array of specialists to assist in filling the gaps for young people 'on-site'. Staffing currently includes three qualified teachers (primary and secondary) to support young people through a range of individual needs and team mentoring approaches.

Classroom techniques are seen as revisiting and reforming situations signifying failure to marginalised young people. Individual tuition is offered in non-threatening environments. This ensures that literacy and numeracy, social literacy and multiliteracies are apparent in jobseeking and job related training. There is focus on the needs of the whole person through complementary support mechanisms and linkages to professional associates such as those in health, wellbeing and crisis support. All agencies used as referrals also provide the high quality of engagement with marginalised young people demanded by the Centre. If this is found wanting and the precious trust of the young person jeopardised, the Programme perceives this as a failure they can ill-afford. For this reason, partnerships at the organisational level are regarded as deflecting attention from the needs of the young person. It is the individual expertise that is targeted in a "just in time" manner rather than expending energy on a broader involvement which may not lead to better service the diverse and dynamic needs of its clientele.

Should a service provider be seen as wanting, the JPP then initiates strategies to ensure that, through closer collaboration or by providing the service themselves or contracting the necessary expertise, the needs of the young person are met. Whilst qualifications are important, the ability of staff to provide a sense of connectedness for marginalised young people is paramount in service delivery. The manager is constantly headhunting and

recognising the worth of consultants for the JPP. It has been observed in this vast region, that marginalised young people have been churned through VCE and low level VET qualifications such as Certificate II level in Training Packages. The young people have been legitimately deemed as competent when they do not have the capacity to write their name and address on a job application. They certainly are not able to complete the forty page assessment instrument produced by the fast food multinational which prides itself as a major employer of young people in the region. These gaps in skill levels are reiterated constantly by employers and industry bodies within the region.

Coaching and role playing for jobs is also shunned by this JPP as unsustainable unless this performance is underpinned with the embedded social and multiliteracies including reading, writing, listening and speaking for the diverse range of communications required in the workplace. The manager emphasises that unless the skills demonstrated each day in the workplace (as distinct from those not made apparent as underpinning the Training Packages) are addressed in the training plans, superficial instruction will not sustain young people in employment. Parents of young people who have graduated with their VCE from prestigious schools are genuinely puzzled that their confident children are unable to complete a job application form or carry out workplace communication tasks requiring speaking, reading and writing. Success in this JPP is measured by the smiles on young people's faces as they begin their learning each day. A Centre where parents and young people as well as teachers from local schools and colleges, may drop in provides a relaxing space in the largest town in the region. Here young people can receive tuition in their homework as well as other support services.

Case One takes seriously its role to communicate to government the needs of the learners in the JPP by providing a representative to a Commonwealth youth advisory body. This particular young person, herself an early graduate of the JPP, is currently employed by the Centre to assist other young people in their pathways throughout life. It is also not to be lost on this research that the topic chosen for investigation was literacy and numeracy issues, particularly given her exposure to young people experiencing difficulties in her professional role. She chose to research the need for mentor support for young people experiencing difficulties with literacy and numeracy and reported this in *Beyond the Traffic Lights*. Because of her work, Fionna Lawson was acknowledged by the Minister of the day who indicated that he would look at including mentoring into the new guidelines for the New Apprenticeships Access Programme (Dr David Kemp Media Release, 19 September, 2001). This work is particularly noteworthy given the findings of a recent report. This report suggests that while Australian young people have high levels of political knowledge, they are the most politically apathetic when compared with their overseas counterparts (Mellor, Kennedy & Greenwood, 2002).

Location

Catchment for the JPP is an area from Ballarat to the South Australian border and south to the coastline. The site of this research was in a major regional town.

Program

The literacy program is provided through a Drop In Centre where young people, many still at school, come to do their homework and gain assistance to complete successfully. Literacy and numeracy programs utilise qualified teachers, peer tutoring and community volunteers. These programs are supported by complementary therapies from qualified practitioners that are described below. The Centre orients literacy and numeracy support to the requirements of the school and college curriculum as well as to the workplace communication required to meet the future employment goals of the older participants.

Education approaches

East and West

Case One contracts educators who are active in the LEAP (Learning Enhancement Advanced Program) Institute for some of the young people who approach for assistance. The Institute is an international group of literacy and numeracy practitioners and researchers with strong research links with Swinburne University of Technology Brain Sciences Unit, the Austin Brain Sciences Institute in Melbourne, Chester Neuro-psychology Institute in the UK and the Harvard Medical School in the USA. The leader of the Australian LEAP Institute team undertakes his work in Germany. In applying the research findings of the Institute, the practitioners use an enhanced kinesiology, a neuro-emotional technique, to identify and release barriers to learning frustrating particular young clients of the JPP who form a small proportion of their overall client base. Essentially, the treatment for high levels of anger and scholastic dysfunctionality is based on Eastern acupressure and Western physiology and physics. The practitioners in this field understand that all events in the developing learner (family, school and community) impact on and overlay the predisposition to learning. The barriers are progressively identified and overcome through acupressure. The impact of emotional trauma in young children cannot be overstated in their later learning abilities.

The practitioner uses touch and stimulus exercises to lead the individual through barriers and to establish the requisite connectivity for learning with remarkable results. Young people say "I get that" as mathematical formula is modelled when previously it eluded their understanding. They quickly apply it to more complex situations relying on that hitherto absent learning and make very fast progress to the delight of learners who have worried for years through additional maths classes to no effect. The practitioner insists that as an educator he is no better than other teachers of numeracy. His understanding, however, of the latest research on brain function and acupressure points enables the numeracy connectivity to be manifest in such a way that young people quickly catch up on topics and begin gaining high marks where previously they had failed. He points out that his practice is informed by extremely high levels of expertise from recognised brain research centres and this accounts for the rapid progress in the way the learning takes place. He suggests that classroom atmosphere and teacher approach made possible in smaller classes better focus the learning of his students. As he teaches in small groups or individually, classroom management techniques are not at issue and this makes progress for individual learners remarkably fast.

The LEAP Institute believes that if identification and treatment were possible in kindergarten, literacy and numeracy problems could be eliminated before they become manifest in school with the associated problems of disengagement. The LEAP Institute has been instrumental in establishing an alternative school (kindergarten to Year 12 forthcoming) in Melbourne to demonstrate their beliefs and concepts in action. The LEAP Institute believe that the earlier young children can establish brain functionality that supports learning, the better. They assert that young kindergarten groups could well use the techniques to better focus brain function on their learning and this could lead to their easily acquiring literacy and numeracy skills in school.

Collaboration and new curriculum

One of the schools involved with Case One is piloting the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). They have identified a need for such curriculum in schools because so many students quietly disappear before Year 10 because literacy and numeracy issues are not addressed. Piloting this product provides funds for dual enrolment in TAFE and school as well as for integrating literacy and numeracy in a variety of subjects including personal development, vocational education or workplace communication. This qualification is offered through partnerships between TAFE, the school and the JPP in the region. An adult approach to learning is encouraged within the TAFE delivery. The school-based contact asks to be called by his first name and small groups are offered as a strategy to address individual learning styles. Casual dress is also encouraged. The local JPP conducts sessions on future options with the young people, while the curriculum also offers skills development in accessing community support and making decisions which often entails confidence building. The initial idea for changes in the schools has been precipitated by the longevity of JPP in the region and the clear success in the way they offer opportunities for marginalised young people to learn. The sessions after school offered by the Drop in Centre established by the JPP has inspired welfare workers and teachers in local schools to become involved in the changes.

Another curriculum initiative at a school which is involved with the JPP, has been an alternative program, Creative Minds. It is involving a holistic program with family therapy and commitment from participating carers and parents, involving outdoor education and circus skills as well as addressing the literacy and numeracy issues of the parents and caregivers. Recruitment for this program is based on the welfare worker identifying with local agencies, those young people walking out of their schools in the mornings to find somewhere else to go and who may have a profile for shop lifting and nuisance activity in the locality. He has noticed that unless the school offers an alternative, the young people's behaviour begins a downward spiral. The needs of the group of young people are identified through packaging partnerships with the school to provide the kinds of activities and learning opportunities to which the young people will respond.

The funding for this is outside the allocation for the school. The success of such programs has provided motivation for a partnership between school, colleges, Institutes and community. This partnership is currently pressing for the establishment of a local learning exchange which will design the kinds of flexibility so that marginalised young people may become engaged in life long learning and not quietly disappear from the education system. Unless school personnel become actively involved in local committees through partnership, additional funding into school programs is unobtainable.

Tools for changing practice – a lot to learn

In this case, opportunities are provided within a school for demonstrating to students and teachers alike that classrooms can change for the better. An enthusiastic pedagogue enjoys challenging young people and his colleagues at the same time. His background is not education; among other things it is youth work, applied psychology and juvenile justice programs. All this provides the basis for an adventure with learning which appeals to marginalised young people who have demonstrated their needs are not being met by the current school offerings. Many opportunities are provided to observe and record learning styles and learner temperament.

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These tools inform fundamental features of classroom management such as the distance and shape of classroom furniture and seating, the flexibility for students to use class space to maximise their concentration and the best approach for the facilitator to establish rapport. While the learning resources offered through partnerships and ad hoc funding are outside the conventional school curriculum, they are regarded as tools to involve marginalised young people in self-awareness and their own learning.

Young people enjoy the sessions immensely and learn tricks to increase memory quickly. There is an endless supply of stories exemplifying learning opportunities and the efficacy of challenging tradition. Once the young learner has this information they proceed to trust the wisdom of this non-teacher and progress quickly with learning their school subjects. Parent and teacher information sessions provide the support that the young people need to gain the most from their sessions where activities, quizzes and memory games are fun and convincing! Convincing colleagues is also part of the role played to influence pedagogical practice. The pace of such reform would increase should educational leadership for innovation be supported more broadly and at each level of government. Again, the work of this enthusiast within the region is based on over a decade of successful work around and in schools.

Within a particular school, a strategic alliance of management and innovative staff is the basis for success for meeting the needs of young people thinking about leaving school. Within a particular region, strategic alliances with funded innovative programs at local, State and Commonwealth levels keep the political pressure on for more sustainable approaches to the needs of marginalised young people. The program of workshops and 'conversations' planned by the Victorian Schools Innovation Commission is welcomed. These opportunities will both motivate change and support networks of men and women of good will as Habermas (1992) would say, because the use of *communicative reason* is to act to change the 'facts' of 'good practice' into the norm in society through appropriate administrative law.

Case One is looking to engage some of its clients in small enterprises and are currently investigating options. An option recommended to the manager of the JPP is listed in the box below to provide information that may impact on the future JPP. There is certainly a need for innovation for those JPPs in regions with high unemployment and declining job growth to encourage young people to continue to live in the area. One such innovation is currently emerging in Victoria. This program encourages marginalised young people with literacy and numeracy and the attendant social issues to commit to values combining social justice, peace on earth and business skills to create new jobs with community purpose. The philosophy and work of the philanthropic trust is explained followed by the findings of the focus group conducted with some of the participants in the trust's businesses and events.

A Case for Conscientious Enterprise

A philanthropic trust, Freedom Team Foundation Inc., has been established from the personal commitment of twenty team members by liquidating their personal assets. This demonstrates that as we take responsibility for our reality on an individual basis, this is seen and felt at a collective level. The result is trust in self and others, all free to live their life in contentment, fulfilment, equality and abundance.

This foundation has created a youth program, *Passion for Life*. It is an entity from which marginalised young people develop skills, values and attitudes fulfilling social, environmental and economic success. The *Passion for Life* youth program is geared around each participant identifying the negative ego control model they have used, "to get what they want", often manifesting itself through drug usage, anorexia, alcohol abuse, accidents, crime, violence and suicide, regardless of the devastating toll these behaviours have on others.

Passion for Life assists young people to transcend negative family conditioning judgements. The limiting values and beliefs are cleared to realise the passion driving their inherent creativity. Each person becomes self motivated as *Passion for Life* addresses the underlying core issues to completion. Throughout the program, participants clearly see they have a choice to create their dreams and passions.

For older learners, the program brings each participant to the successful completion of their desired goals and outcomes. Each person's skills are given direction and expanded in a powerful and productive way to achieve maximum results.

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A Case for Conscientious Enterprise

One such enterprise is an innovative design business, *Universal Symbols*. It services web, graphic and logo design and produces gift cards and posters with contracts to supply to David Jones and Galaxy Poster. This is one of the outcomes of *Passion for Life*.

Freedom Team Foundation Inc. consists of professionals with backgrounds in welfare, community care, psychotherapy, training, arts, business, health, media technologies, music, dance and education. Their combined skills and talents have created a diversity of programs, such as:

- 'Class Actions-Free to Learn.....Naturally!' is a tutoring service equipping school children with skills of self analysis, shifting their negative personal and classroom behaviours while increasing their capacities in literacy and numeracy. This is achieved through identifying their individual perceptual strengths and developing their own strategies for learning.
- 'Young at Heart Program' offers transformational therapy, orienting people to new ways of being, and joy to elderly people in aged care facilities.
- 'Kiddy Peace on Earth' works with young people using music and song and is a wonderful, simple, fun educational formula to build permanent self esteem and a positive attitude to life.
- 'Freedom from Anger' creates an environment in which all resentment, rage, anger and guilt can be released safely.
- 'Blue Pearl' arranges performances by local young musicians using original songs and scores.
- Revegetation and regeneration of the natural environment captures conscientious interests of young people.

To sustain the Foundation, all members work jobs in telemarketing, door to door sales and community arts as well as developing their own businesses. This employment often provides the impetus for entrepreneurial activities as well as experiential learning in marketing to potential customers and establishing relationships and networks. Fundraising activities including event management for the Foundation provide further opportunities for a range of skills and builds self-confidence.

An emerging business opportunity for the Foundation is the interest being taken in the various projects funded through the Commonwealth government in the Employment Services area. It is apparent that by shifting value to trust and mutual cooperation, for the common good, The Foundation will assist young people create a future of unity, prosperity and productivity.

Success through freedom

For a group of older young people shifting the values inherited unchallenged from family, school and community is a daily challenge they are willing to share with others no matter what age. They speak of a number of ideas which entail trust, love, intimacy, creativity and, of necessity, an open heart. In resolving their own issues with drugs and alcohol, rape and abuse, depression and suicide, poverty, single parenting, the search for biological parents and unemployment, they have created new possibilities and freedom from their previous harsh judgements of themselves and those around them. Through their understandings and insights, they have created businesses based on programs in demand in the marketplace. These programs which are for humanistic education in child care, aged care and employment have enabled the young people to identify what counts as success for them.

The keys to success were identified during a significant emotional experience disclosed through psychotherapeutic drama and insight. Their *Superconscious Communication* and *Soul Union* revealed, through psychodynamic engagement, their purpose as creators of their social and emotional environment. Through this, each identified core issues around what had driven them in the past to underachieve in school, to embark on a spiral of unacceptable behaviour and superficial relationships based on mistrust. They were supported in their emotional shift by expertise in psychodynamic techniques. Identifying their personal control model, and the ways in which they got what they wanted at the cost of others, released them from old attachments and allowed new energies to flow for universal good through community service and artistic expression. Identifying what they are passionate about, and using that as a strength to be supported and support their peers allows them to breakdown the isolation in the continual journey to achieve compassion and forgiveness for themselves and for others.

The supportive emotional environment underpinned by an organisation providing considerable expertise and unconditional love effuses the program with considerable resources and capacity for global change.

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Recruitment

Word of mouth is the preferred recruitment method for participants in the literacy and numeracy program run by the JPP. Networking and collaboration is the recruitment method for qualified workers in the Centre and for approaching volunteers. Young people who have graduated from the programs and whose skills are required by the job description may be successful in an open selection process for administration and project staff.

Evaluation

Longevity of profile in the district is fundamental to the success young people find in this service that includes the provision of literacy and numeracy. The close relationship the service maintains with local employers and its support of young people with literacy and numeracy issues in that employment are highly valued. Providing a non-school atmosphere where learners may drop in and by recruiting supportive staff, often young, who are fully committed to those approaching the service also contributes to success. Strong action oriented collaborations are fostered around young people's needs and regional requirements for resources in education and employment.

An educationalist involved in the network and offering innovative programs within secondary schools and community organisations found the 'youth development good practice indicators' (See Appendix D) useful for the work he was doing.

According to Young (1990), Habermas challenges men and women of good will in education through *communicative reason* to encourage political action in their learners. Case One takes processes in their region around young people's civic and political involvement very seriously. The result of their action around *communicative reason* has produced a regional representative to the *DETYA Youth Roundtable* in 2001.

How does Case One measure up in regard to 'best practice in youth literacy and numeracy'? This list has been derived from those created by McGuirk and her team (See Appendix C) and the other indicators for youth transition systems and youth development synthesised by the researcher (see Appendices A to K). A checklist provides confirmation that Case One demonstrates 'good practice' and also success for the young people.

Indicator McGuirk (NSW 2001) Appendix 2C	Indicator Descriptor Rationale – Synthesis Appendices A to K	Case One
1. Your program	Programs for young people must be flexible and challenging in timing and duration	☑
2. Planning your program	Planning for youth literacy programs takes many factors into consideration so that the individual requirements are accounted for and the teacher can be flexible about how outcomes are achieved	☑
3. Strategies and activities	Youth literacy programs require adaptation of the strategies outlined for adult literacy in texts	☑
4. Resources	Youth programs require resources unique to their environment and their goals	☑
5. Learner groupings	Young people's complex needs including and underpinned by literacy needs require careful planning of learner groupings especially where young people are from NESB and Indigenous background	Individual tuition
6. Assessment	Young people require feedback on progress and evidence that their participation is worthwhile	☑
7. Outcomes	Best practice pedagogies in youth literacy meet the individual young person's goals and the goals for organisational profile within the complex youth service environment	☑
8. Beliefs about literacy and numeracy	Best practice pedagogies for young learners are matched with their individual goals and focus on the strengths which the learner brings	☑
9. Keeping up to date	Best practice pedagogies for learners who are young people rely on the latest research and discussion about their complex and rapidly changing policy environment	☑

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Indicator McGuirk (NSW 2001) Appendix 2C	Indicator Descriptor Rationale – Synthesis Appendices A to K	Case One
10. Issues and challenges	Best practice programs for young people rely on teachers being positive about change and modelling strategies to meet the challenges	✓

Developed from *Adult literacy and numeracy practices 2001: a national snapshot,* New South Wales, Department of Education & Training, 2001: 12

Table 2: 'Good Practice' in Pedagogies of Youth 'At-Risk' Literacy Programs: Case Study One

Case Two – Intergenerational Mentoring

Case Study Two site is located in the southern rim of greater metropolitan Melbourne and is one part of a larger organisation. This site has accessed ANTA Innovative Grants in 2000 to explore new ways of embedding literacy and numeracy in experiential learning in their programs for marginalised young people. Reports of a past innovative project funded by DETYA, now DEST (Skillsplus Inc., 2001) were provided. The programs described enjoy the substantial commitment of the local Federal member who involves himself with the young people and the elderly as mutual learners and mentors in the project. Recent State funding has allowed the lessons of the pilot project funded by the Commonwealth to further refine initiatives to engage elderly residents, young people and their families in an intergenerational mentoring project. It will also provide continuing strong collaboration with local schools. The project attracts support and anticipated funding through modelling experiential learning that embeds social literacy and multiliteracies. School personnel are challenged to rethink the "at risk" category when they are invited to the public performance of the young people. Here the young people demonstrate skills in reaching an audience of local people from a range of age groups. The processes also entail young people to connect with influential people, a fundamental aspect of networking for potential job opportunities.

This is a product-oriented project relying on complex processes to ensure the result is a public performance celebrating young and elderly participation alike. The project ensures that the production values of the work of the young people and their elderly learners are extremely high. Young people budget for that quality through the numeracy competencies embedded in the project.

Location,

Case Two is located in South East Outer Metropolitan Melbourne.

Program

The program is classroom based as the young people are teaching computer skills to groups of elderly learners. The young people, however, range far and wide within the community to meet the demands of the project.

Educational approaches

The emphasis in these projects is on experiential learning for young people and their elderly mentors. Through the projects, young people and their families become engaged in learning with purpose, breaking down generational barriers, building community awareness of older people and developing an acceptance and commitment to young people and their unique role in developing technological skills in the older population.

Recruitment

The program is selective in recruitment. There is always a waiting list to gain a place in these projects because of the media profile of past successes that have impacted on schools and parent bodies in the region. The current project is recruiting young people at 'high risk' of leaving school early. The goal is to maintain their enrolment at school or to allow transition to VET provision in the region.

Evaluation

The coordinator and practitioner of the program rightly pointed out that youth literacy has been propelled by government policy with very little preparedness or funding in the community sector to manage the vast demand that the Youth Allowance and Mutual Obligation social policies have precipitated. In the case of that site, the youth provision wants policy and operational guidelines to improve their capacity to absorb youth programs into

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their core business. They regarded 'youth development best practice indicators' as providing a good basis for this.

The checklist provides a way to identify that this program in providing success for young people and demonstrates that it also reflects 'good practice' in literacy and numeracy provision.

Indicator McGuirk (NSW 2001) Appendix 2C	Indicator Descriptor Rationale – Synthesis Appendices A to K	Case Two
1. Your program	Programs for young people must be flexible and challenging in timing and duration	☑
2. Planning your program	Planning for youth literacy programs takes many factors into consideration so that the individual requirements are accounted for and the teacher can be flexible about how outcomes are achieved	☑
3. Strategies and activities	Youth literacy programs require adaptation of the strategies outlined for adult literacy in texts	☑
4. Resources	Youth programs require resources unique to their environment and their goals	☑
5. Learner groupings	Young people's complex needs including and underpinned by literacy needs require careful planning of learner groupings especially where young people are from NESB and Indigenous background	☑
6. Assessment	Young people require feedback on progress and evidence that their participation is worthwhile	☑
7. Outcomes	Best practice pedagogies in youth literacy meet the individual young person's goals and the goals for organisational profile within the complex youth service environment	☑
8. Beliefs about literacy and numeracy	Best practice pedagogies for young learners are matched with their individual goals and focus on the strengths which the learner brings	☑
9. Keeping up to date	Best practice pedagogies for learners who are young people rely on the latest research and discussion about their complex and rapidly changing policy environment	☑
10. Issues and challenges	Best practice programs for young people rely on teachers being positive about change and modelling strategies to meet the challenges	☑

Developed from *Adult literacy and numeracy practices 2001: a national snapshot,* New South Wales, Department of Education & Training, 2001: 12

Table 3: 'Good Practice' in Pedagogies of Youth 'At-Risk' Literacy Programs: Case Study Two

Case Three – Nothing Succeeds Like Success

Product is also central to the success for young people in Case Three (De Cinque, 1999). Focus on product can divest the marginalised young person of all the baggage of years of classroom boredom and humiliation. Case Three identifies their client group as 'marginalised' rather than 'high risk' because the literature indicates that the risk is in the likelihood of leaving school. The young people who come to the community centre have been out of school often for some years and have been since marginalised through the processes of exclusion. Though the learning is conducted in class groups for cost efficiency under funding contracts, the commitment of the staff, utilising their personal resources, encourages young people to engage and become lost, despite themselves, in their particular individual project.

Commitment by staff is also necessary to work with young people in addressing their personal barriers to learning. Initially the young learners confront their teachers to confirm their belief that they will fail ('*are loosers*'). They seek reaction to their 'bad' behaviour. They are pleasantly surprised after a lengthy period of procrastination and intensive encouragement that they can come to terms with enjoyment and success. Incremental goal setting can produce their own clothes, audio tapes of their musical performance, videotapes of a narrative with performances of other young people, learner driving permits and other projects. For more settled

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young people, they embark on retail competencies. During this time they experience a respect and politeness by the staff and other learners in the Community Centre hitherto unknown. Unfortunately, relationships between the young people and those in the immediate neighbourhood are not respectful and this provides another opportunity for learning and embedding social literacy within the program.

This program is offered in northern metropolitan Melbourne, a post war suburb with numbers of marginalised young people who have been excluded by the school system through life experiences. There is a waiting list here based on word of mouth and the interest of the juvenile justice system in the successes of its clients. Young women for example are less likely to enrol in classes and teachers fear that they are less confident than young men to approach the centre. Experiences of continued exclusion or the culture of the juvenile justice system are hard to overcome even when the young people begin to succeed in learning and wish to graduate to VET or secondary school. No matter how successful their learning in the program offered at the Community Centre, some graduates remain excluded from the next step. For those marginalised young people, it then means a limited success.

This reality challenges the notion that pathways promoted by current Commonwealth and State policies utilise the necessary evidence-based research. The OECD suggests that in meeting the needs of marginalised young people, its members' education systems must have convincing evidence that their programs will not lead to further exclusion (OECD, 2000a). The Australian research evidence is that schools and VET are not offering learning opportunities for marginalised young people (Curtain, 2001; Lamb, 2001). Secondary schools persist in refusing admission with no recourse or grievance process to enforce accountability. The experiences of the young people in this popular program reflect the findings of the Ministerial Review of 2000. In that review, it was noted that the system remained careless about the public purpose of education and complacent about current levels of disengagement of young Victorians from education from an early age (Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Commission, 2002). In the face of this community complacency, success for the staff is measured by the young person returning to talk informally when the staff continue to show respect in their interpersonal interactions, even when no funds are available to further the young peoples' learning. Otherwise they return to the streets or the lounge room if they have shelter. In the face of the system's exclusion of such vulnerable young people, if they can recall later in life that they found one teacher who insisted on and returned respect and who embedded their practice in values around social justice then the program is regarded as being successful.

What is important is quick success and a product as evidence, *because nothing beats success*. It is also necessary that the goal is maintained and that the program has the flexibility to keep to the goal. Often partnerships in the plan cannot provide this service and then the young person gives up trying. Because the learning opportunities offered at the Centre are values based, much of the developmental work is not funded, placing strain on coordination staff who fill the void of sessional staff.

In the experiences of Case Three, marginalised young people have coped with further social exclusion since recent State innovations have been introduced. This has occurred through the introduction of a voucher system whose administration further excludes young people with complex issues in their lives. To address the adverse effects of this, resources to the school and TAFE system currently excluding young people from low socio-economic backgrounds has to be augmented with comparable resources to the ACE sector. The *Kirby Review* suggested that this ACE sector which is closer to the community and with its transformative potential is best able to meet the diverse needs of its young clients.

Location

This program is offered in the northern suburbs of Melbourne.

Program

Case Three offers the CGEA to provide the necessary flexibility in meeting the learners' goals and providing pathways to VCE, apprenticeships and traineeships, vocational courses and job searching.

Recruitment

For participants in the program, the site uses word of mouth from graduates and students as well as their reputation with clients of the juvenile justice system. As in Case One, Case Three recruits content specialists rather than qualified literacy and numeracy teachers. Staff are headhunted through word of mouth. Opportunities to collaborate with other agencies provide ways to meet other committed people. In this way, they attract the attention of the program coordinator who is always on the look out for those with such talents. While administrative demands are impacting on the work at the Centre, it is not compromised when a facilitator is found who can encourage success for the first time in young learners.

Evaluation

Both Case One and Case Three suggest that the case load in the community and the skew of resources to the schools sector ensure that the Managed Individual Pathways funding further marginalises young people with diverse needs. Marginalised young people are not job ready after 400 student contact hours of instruction. They have not the literacy and numeracy skills, involving speaking, listening, reading, writing and understanding social and power dynamics increasingly required when dealing with bureaucratic systems, schools, VET and employers. An action plan does not a pathway make in such a situation.

For marginalised young people who are able to access the open door philosophy of the community sector, the particular literacy and numeracy are of necessity founded on social and critical literacies. Both the young people and their teachers struggle for recognition using the program products, politicians, media and community profile to raise awareness of the worthwhile programs on offer and the need for funds. A recent decision to make available only one voucher per young person to this sector, a government subsidy for four hundred hours of contact, will force a different incorporation of literacy and numeracy as the program will have to be directly geared to the next step, either VCE or VET. Teachers in such programs have indicated that this is an impossible time frame for young people who may be homeless, with mental health issues and socially isolated.

The lack of funding for youth projects in ACE has brought into question the political will and the capacity of administrative law (Habermas, 1992) to meet the claim by solidarity of the community to relevant educational experiences through *communicative reason*. There are simply insufficient funds to do justice to the levels and quality of service required by the complex needs of poverty stricken young learners. Current policy interfacing ACE and vocational outcomes for young people is also at work making their position more vulnerable. It seems that with every rewrite of policy the barriers become higher, the documentary evidence required greater and the accountability deeper for this most under-resourced education sector. The checklist provides a way to identify that this program in providing success for young people and demonstrates that it also reflects 'good practice' in literacy and numeracy provision.

Indicator McGuirk (NSW 2001) Appendix 2C	Indicator Descriptor Rationale – Synthesis Appendices A to K	Case Three
1. Your program	Programs for young people must be flexible and challenging in timing and duration	☑
2. Planning your program	Planning for youth literacy programs takes many factors into consideration so that the individual requirements are accounted for and the teacher can be flexible about how outcomes are achieved	☑
3. Strategies and activities	Youth literacy programs require adaptation of the strategies outlined for adult literacy in texts	☑
4. Resources	Youth programs require resources unique to their environment and their goals	☑
5. Learner groupings	Young people's complex needs including and underpinned by literacy needs require careful planning of learner groupings especially where young people are from NESB and Indigenous background	☑
6. Assessment	Young people require feedback on progress and evidence that their participation is worthwhile	☑
7. Outcomes	Best practice pedagogies in youth literacy meet the individual young person's goals and the goals for organisational profile within the complex youth service environment	☑
8. Beliefs about literacy and numeracy	Best practice pedagogies for young learners are matched with their individual goals and focus on the strengths which the learner brings	☑
9. Keeping up to date	Best practice pedagogies for learners who are young people rely on the latest research and discussion about their complex and rapidly changing policy environment	☑
10. Issues and challenges	Best practice programs for young people rely on teachers being positive about change and modelling strategies to meet the challenges	☑

Developed from *Adult literacy and numeracy practices 2001: a national snapshot*, New South Wales, Department of Education & Training, 2001: 12

Table 4: 'Good Practice' in Pedagogies of Youth 'At-Risk' Literacy Programs: Case Study Three

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Case Four – Capturing Learning

Case Four is a Kangan Batman TAFE special purpose program for young women who are within the juvenile justice system in a residential centre in inner Melbourne which is operated by the Department of Human Services.

Work is being carried out within the field of prison literacy (Dyson & Delaney, 2000) but the residential youth field is a specialist stream within this area. Educational resources are growing at this facility, with a library and librarian assisting young women in their access to information. Partnerships are the key to the success of a pathways approach which supports each young woman as her time for leaving draws near. When the goal to gain employment is identified, strong links with large employers of young women in administrative skills and Job Network providers are necessary. Most young women are serving sentences of up to six months, the average being three months and with one young woman serving five years.

By identifying a job as a goal, the young women activate a range of support programs linking them to community services, housing and health support as well as job opportunities. Job Network providers and employers conduct training at the Centre in job seeking and resume writing, embedding the social literacy to encourage the young women to attend, dress up and role play interviews. During this process of resume writing and job search, educational gaps are identified for better focusing the general literacy and numeracy streams of the Certificate in General Education Adult (CGEA). With the permission of the young women, the Job Network Provider circulates employers with their resumes so that the likelihood of employment exists after release.

The resources to provide this quality of engagement is the outcome of a strong personal and organisational partnership with the Department of Human Services which contracts the Office of Training and Tertiary Education (OTTE) which contracts Kangan Batman TAFE to deliver the educational program in the residential Centre. Other institutional agencies involved in the partnership meet weekly to discuss each young woman. This collaboration ensures an effective team approach minimising confusion for the young woman involved and allows permitted information to be tabled to support personnel working with the young women in meeting their educational and employment goals. These teams are involved in each action plan that is developed during the first few weeks of incarceration. The young women negotiate their goals that often include employment. For those with longer sentences, a view to undertaking the VCE is negotiated by the coordinator.

Location

This Case site is located in inner Melbourne and is a residential centre in the juvenile justice system.

Program

Literacy and numeracy are embedded in all activities. Classes of up to eight have twenty hours contact per week. Classes are offered Monday to Friday and TAFE holidays are observed with other teams being involved in a program of activities over the semester and summer breaks.

Like so many literacy teachers with youth as the focus, the teachers at the Residential Centre customise CGEA for the particular needs of the individual young women. Customised learning resources such as *Risk It* are emerging in the field and are regarded as very useful, depending on the interest areas of the young women. Teachers explore literacy and numeracy through the young women's life experiences, role modelling and exploring gender politics.

The alignment of the CGEA to the *Certificate I in Hospitality Operations* has provided an effective *Recognition of Prior Learning* (RPL) process in TAFE allowing a clear pathway into hospitality courses on release.

The program at the centre is activity based around art, performance, ceramics, wooden sculpture, horticulture, communication and information technology. Social literacy is fundamental, with teachers modelling scenarios and using conversation and problem solving, thus encouraging young women to put the logical argument. This work is assessed through teachers' daily reflections and checklists that record progress.

Case Four orients graduates to TAFE on release. 'Good practice' in success in TAFE is founded on engagement and a team approach with the young people and their learning. Fundamental to the literacy and numeracy in the programs offered to marginalised young people in these TAFE programs is the authentic engagement of teachers in the lives of the young people. As well, there is their ability to use resources and to practice nurturing classroom techniques to encourage learning. Teachers remark often on the vulnerability of these learners who may never have received a word of encouragement. Past lapses of quality teaching must be addressed to convince participants to put any effort into the classroom. Genuine empathy for young people and their parents are needed to augment classroom techniques focused on success.

The clear message is that, in the classroom, literacy and numeracy teachers must engage with young people with respect. Teachers report that *"respect"* is used often with their students. The group manages behaviour through respect for their teachers and each other. Rules agreed to by the young people are observed and enforced with commitment.

Teachers' engagement in the lives of the young people needs to be tempered with team support and formal sessions for debriefing that address the emotional costs of concern and involvement with the harsh reality of social exclusion. Teachers respect the young person's strengths and talents as well as their lived experiences and learn to know when to nurture and be gentle in their responses. Together, the learning occurs with students writing about the issues in their lives. The most effective learning takes place if the family or household is integrated into the learning with parents and carers coming to terms with realistic goals for their children. Despite opportunities to advise on possible career paths, the dominance of proceeding to Year 12 propels including literacy and numeracy in such a way that the CGEA aligns with VCE where expectations of succeeding at Year 11 and then Year 12 academic discourse are present.

Recruitment

The coordinator of the program chooses her staff carefully and provides mentoring into a highly specialised work environment. Close observation of learning styles is maximised during the interview session on enrolment, establishing rapport and identifying pedagogies relevant to the learners by allowing time for individual encouragement suited to each learner's temperament outside class is key to motivation and involvement.

Educational approaches

Collaborative team work for negotiated learning

In the case of some TAFE programs, traditional literacy and numeracy teachers have often been unable to engage marginalised young people in learning. In this instance, a collaborative approach was needed. This entailed experienced literacy and numeracy teachers relying on practitioners who have backgrounds in youth work, sport, recreation, hospitality and marketing to devise a task for assessment. In applying these understandings, attitudes, and skills, non-literacy and numeracy personnel respect activity based learning styles. They offer opportunities for learners to produce a range of writing, gain enjoyment and to increase their ability to memorise through quizzes and puzzles. Their writing can then be analysed and assessed by the other teachers in the team from their own discipline perspectives. These collaborative approaches are necessary and found to be of great value for the program as a whole. At the heart of the product and the pedagogy is often a practitioner who has neither teaching nor literacy and numeracy specialities to support marginalised young people. Success is measured by the full attendance of the participants in the sessions on offer. Professional experience and a background specific to the adult literacy and numeracy field often has to be augmented with youth work experience. The collaborative approach and partnership is a practitioner initiated strategy to overcome gaps in preservice and inservice courses in literacy and numeracy practitioner development, with current learning resources mostly geared for an adult environment.

In the case of another particular TAFE program not involved in the juvenile justice system, collaboration with organisations and services outside the institution, ones respected and used by the local young people, provided an effective source of learners for the programs. Often these young people responded to the adult learning environment and the presence and the modelling of focused learners in the library and in the communal areas. Without having to hang around "school" at recess and lunch times, and merely attending for the short concentrated learning sessions, minimised opportunities for becoming involved in the substance abuse economy. This also allowed young people who had found casual employment in the fast food outlets to continue their employment.

Negotiation is the key to involving young people in learning. Encouraging participation, pacing the learning around active and passive activities and encompassing a range of delivery styles in the teaching team lie at the heart of the success and the impressive levels of productivity.

Evaluation

TAFE programs as described above have been most successful in providing a pathway back into the VCE stream and local schools. Some graduates have accessed TAFE but this depends on the type of course being available in the locality. Transport and cultural isolation present major barriers to post-compulsory education in many areas just as the practice, curriculum and pedagogy of many teachers in schools present barriers for marginalised young people in the courses on offer. These TAFE courses are so successful that youth workers are pressing for the inclusion of clients as young as twelve years of age. TAFE is not funded for students under fifteen years of age; this growing group presents a real opportunity for school reform and innovation. Improvements in school

pedagogy in literacy and numeracy are clearly warranted. While TAFE considers the challenges for providing relevant learning opportunities through a collaborative approach, schools also have challenges to meet.

The checklist below shows how the juvenile residential centre and the outer urban TAFE programs relate to the benchmarks for 'good practice' in youth literacy.

Indicator McGuirk (NSW 2001) Appendix 2C	Indicator Descriptor Rationale – Synthesis Appendices A to K	Case Four
1. Your program	Programs for young people must be flexible and challenging in timing and duration	☑
2. Planning your program	Planning for youth literacy programs takes many factors into consideration so that the individual requirements are accounted for and the teacher can be flexible about how outcomes are achieved	☑
3. Strategies and activities	Youth literacy programs require adaptation of the strategies outlined for adult literacy in texts	☑
4. Resources	Youth programs require resources unique to their environment and their goals	☑
5. Learner groupings	Young people's complex needs including and underpinned by literacy needs require careful planning of learner groupings especially where young people are from NESB and Indigenous background	☑
6. Assessment	Young people require feedback on progress and evidence that their participation is worthwhile	☑
7. Outcomes	Best practice pedagogies in youth literacy meet the individual young person's goals and the goals for organisational profile within the complex youth service environment	☑
8. Beliefs about literacy and numeracy	Best practice pedagogies for young learners are matched with their individual goals and focus on the strengths which the learner brings	☑
9. Keeping up to date	Best practice pedagogies for learners who are young people rely on the latest research and discussion about their complex and rapidly changing policy environment	☑
10. Issues and challenges	Best practice programs for young people rely on teachers being positive about change and modelling strategies to meet the challenges	☑

Developed from *Adult literacy and numeracy practices 2001: a national snapshot,* New South Wales, Department of Education & Training, 2001: 12

Table 5: 'Good Practice' in Pedagogies of Youth 'At-Risk' Literacy Programs: Case Study Four

Case Five – Structure and Consistency of Approach

Case Five is an ACE provider with a strong interest in developing successful programs for young people 'at risk' of social as well as educational disengagement. The work on a recent media project at the centre has been documented (Ibrido, 1999; Newcombe, 1999) and a project documenting the views of youth literacy providers in the region has also been reported (Bradshaw, 2001). More broadly, the literacy and numeracy program is developed around activities with a strong community profile. For example, the development of a website for young people in the area was the result of combining literacy with a number of projects. This was the case, too, with a graffiti project incorporating a myriad of tasks with numeracy and literacy skills.

The program uses the CGEA to structure assessment around the Mayer Key Competencies (for VET and industry) as well as the critical literacy competencies. The Youth Program has core literacy and media, numeracy and computer components. Road Rules and Human Development classes are also offered. The Youth Program Coordinator supports each young person, identifying their next step, even accompanying them at interviews, including multiliteracies in the preparation of application forms and role plays, and debriefing afterwards.

Class activities are embedded in the CGEA and derive from this core program. Special projects are accredited against the Mayer Key Competencies identified from the General Curriculum Options of the CGEA. Taking ownership of their environment has encouraged many learners to complete projects. Their teacher has taken the

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opportunity to challenge the young people by using the literacy and numeracy in the CGEA in a number of projects. This has enabled them to enhance the learning environment through decoration of their classrooms. Because the activities or projects become public art, social literacy is further embedded in the consultative process with other users of the Centre and draws on oral, written and problem solving skills.

The result of this consultation process is important for what counts as success in this program. Projects are but a means of attaining confidence in learning by the participants. Most young people have used their engagement with the CGEA at this centre to move into VCE or pre-apprenticeship courses in combination with casual work in the industry. Recruitment for the courses is conducted through a number of partnerships involving the Managed Individual Pathways, the STEPS program, JPET and Juvenile Justice. The Centre does not enjoy refusing people a place, so quite often, like other programs in youth literacy, more young people attend the classes than are funded.

The Program Coordinator believes that classroom activities can settle young people, fulfilling their expectation of where and how learning takes place. The teacher is keen to motivate the learners in literacy by using their written work to identify their learning needs. She finds that it is not essential for teachers to be particularly immersed in youth culture, rather consistency of approach and involvement in assisting learners to meet their goals are important. At the Community Centre, young people realise that the organisation does not employ the security and surveillance which schools have in place. They must take ownership of their learning facility and develop a sense of belonging to the community, so the repair of broken and misused equipment becomes their responsibility. These contexts provide opportunities for young people to analyse power structures in the locality and to discuss issues and solutions to gang warfare and other aspects of life in the region.

Location

This case study site is in the north west suburbs of Melbourne.

Program

Case Five has mapped a particular Youth Media project and this has been reported (Ibrido, 1999). It is structured as a course within the framework, *Transforming Lives: Transforming Communities* (TLTC) (Bradshaw, 1997), which promotes further education values around four concepts – multiplicity, connectedness, critical intelligence and transformation - as this form of education defines itself as broader than vocational education.

Each of the principles outlined in TLTC is further refined in ways in which the curriculum evolves in response to personal and community needs. This means that the young person's engagement can be both broad and deep in its dimensions. While the TLTC principles and their definitions scope the complex potential of community education, the curriculum design model also requires far more involvement on the part of the learners and the teachers than a traditional vocational model. The curriculum design aspects are educational practices, learning outcomes, recognition outcomes and pathway outcomes. It is against this backdrop that the Youth Media project of Case Five was developed. The curriculum aspects (ibid: 16 – 17) were elaborated through the development and demonstration of underpinning literacy and numeracy skills. The efficacy of such detailed planning and preparation against a deep involvement is seen directly through the progress of the learners involved – allowing the documenting of life learning as well as pathways and further connections.

Evaluation

Case Five's interpretation of literacy included critical and social literacies as these prepare young people for life, job seeking and vocational education and training. Young people identifying the VCE as the pathway suited to their goals were also catered for in relation to easy transition to Year 11. The ways in which literacy and numeracy were used depended entirely on the definition of 'at risk' or marginalisation that propelled the young people in these programs to leave or consider leaving school. Learners' needs and goals were paramount in the design of the program.

Should the young person be identified through secondary school processes to be 'at risk' of leaving school early, then the literacy and numeracy program allowed them to re-enter the school or VET system. This pathway depended on whether the local institutions allowed entry to particular young people or if their profile funding provided for the demand. The research has found that in certain regions a pathway from the programs is not without difficulty. Young people labelled as 'at risk' by schools can be really marginalised if encouragement by their teachers and welfare workers into community provision of literacy and numeracy programs does not include the mechanisms for reentry back into their own systems.

Indicator McGuirk (NSW 2001) Appendix 2C	Indicator Descriptor Rationale – Synthesis Appendices A to K	Case Five
1. Your program	Programs for young people must be flexible and challenging in timing and duration	☑
2. Planning your program	Planning for youth literacy programs takes many factors into consideration so that the individual requirements are accounted for and the teacher can be flexible about how outcomes are achieved	☑
3. Strategies and activities	Youth literacy programs require adaptation of the strategies outlined for adult literacy in texts	☑
4. Resources	Youth programs require resources unique to their environment and their goals	☑
5. Learner groupings	Young people's complex needs including and underpinned by literacy needs require careful planning of learner groupings especially where young people are from NESB and Indigenous background	☑
6. Assessment	Young people require feedback on progress and evidence that their participation is worthwhile	☑
7. Outcomes	Best practice pedagogies in youth literacy meet the individual young person's goals and the goals for organisational profile within the complex youth service environment	☑
8. Beliefs about literacy and numeracy	Best practice pedagogies for young learners are matched with their individual goals and focus on the strengths which the learner brings	☑
9. Keeping up to date	Best practice pedagogies for learners who are young people rely on the latest research and discussion about their complex and rapidly changing policy environment	☑
10. Issues and challenges	Best practice programs for young people rely on teachers being positive about change and modelling strategies to meet the challenges	☑

Developed from *Adult literacy and numeracy practices 2001: a national snapshot,* New South Wales, Department of Education & Training, 2001: 12

Table 6: 'Good Practice' in Pedagogies of Youth 'At-Risk' Literacy Programs: Case Study Five

Case Six – Community Profile with Young People

Case Six is an ACE provider operating in a north east suburb of Melbourne. The organisation has for the past several years increased its youth programs to meet more of the needs of young people in the region. The Centre has done this by offering youth specific programs for marginalised and 'at risk' youth as well as creating programs that cater for young people still attending secondary schools. The *Youth Music and Literacy Program* is one such program. Another program is the *Homework Group* where young people drop in after school for support and resources. While not all young people accessing the Centre have literacy and numeracy issues, the *Youth Music and Literacy Program* caters for those who do and are at risk of early school leaving. Once a week, students attend a music studio run by the local council. This provides an opportunity to be involved in literacy programs in the morning and music production in the afternoon. Another initiative taken this year in collaboration with the local council is to offer the Bronze Medallion in Lifesaving leading on to pathways in vocational courses in sport and recreation.

The initial approach taken by the Centre with the young person with literacy difficulties is to incorporate their learning goals, such as *"I want to get a job"* or *"I want to get my Learner's Permit"*, or *"I need a resume"* into the delivery of literacy. In this situation, the literacy is delivered in conjunction with what the student desires and is aligned with an accredited curriculum such as the CGEA. Young people accessing the Centre may enrol in ongoing literacy and computer programs or specific short courses. This allows the learner choices and provides a couple of pathways into programs. The Centre has found that, in some instances, there may be students who feel compelled to attend education and training by government services. As with all young and adult learners, an important and vital component of adult learning is by choice.

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Current funded programs prioritise vocational education within the ACE environment. This funding source has to be augmented with others if young people are to acquire life skills to support their attendance and learning. At present, funding from a variety of sources has to be sought to build in such a program.

Location

This case study site is in the north east suburbs of Melbourne.

Program

Programs at the Centre use a range of recreational and group activities and personal development workshops to ensure that the content of programs addresses the learning gaps often apparent in the experience of marginalised young people. The Centre offers access initially to an informal unstructured learning environment that is very inviting to young people. As they become used to working individually, more structure is introduced to their learning. Young people's learning gaps in such areas as sex education, civic rights and responsibilities, group and interpersonal relations impact on their prospects of employment. Literacy issues are not always present in the experiences of the young people presenting to the Centre. Most of these learners are early school leavers and may have basic literacy issues while, for others, it is issues such as substance abuse and homelessness that are impacting on their learning. As well, some young people who are extremely competent have become bored with school curriculum and culture.

The Centre offers programs from which young adult learners can make pathways to other vocational courses through TAFE, traineeships or apprenticeships and so can, prior to employment, access education and training from a variety of providers over some time before entering the paid work force.

Recruitment

Recruitment of young people is through local agencies and word of mouth. At the end of the first school term, young people begin arriving at the Centre having decided that they are not able to return to school yet are not discouraged from learning. This Centre has observed increasing numbers of young people, who are too young for TAFE and who should be at school, attempting to enrol in their programs because they are attracted to the adult learning environment. They want to learn in safety and have left secondary school early. Referrals from Job Placement Employment and Training program (JPET), Department of Human Services, Department of Health, School Focussed Youth Service and Juvenile Justice also lead young people to the door of opportunity. Because of the range of referral agencies and pathways to further education in the region, the Centre welcomes the recent initiative, Managed Individual Pathways (MIPS). This program tracks young people through stages of transition from initial education to working life. A young person can, with a designated worker, develop an action plan for future education and training.

This site identified that much of their youth literacy and numeracy capacity relied on teachers who had structured their employment patterns to accommodate personal, family and volunteer activities. Opportunities for growth of their youth literacy programs would be limited if current teaching staff had to fill the resulting increased provision. This exacerbates the problem of providing consistency, permanent staffing levels, a strong organisation and a robust program demand.

Evaluation

While the immediate experience of young people encourages involvement, the long term view is of concern. The Centre has observed, through contacts with their graduates over the past decade, that marginalised young people are in danger of being processed through low level courses rather than making gains higher than Certificate II in the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF).

Given its current funding constraints, the Centre also discussed the difficulty for the ACE sector and its organisations in engaging with the corporate sector as partners. Centre staff have identified that working closely with local employers can create pathways to Certificate IV level industry courses. They see engagement with the corporate sector as a strategic opportunity to provide links and networks for local employment. Partnerships with businesses have been identified as complementing the current collaborative community and government arrangements. As a training provider, the Centre does not contact employers in the course of its day- to-day activities so other strategies for involving local employers must be canvassed. Employer contact is undertaken through partnership in the case of JPET clients. The JPET workers are based at the adjacent Community Health Centre. They assist young people directly should they be job-ready. The management committees of ACE providers do not usually have representation from local businesses or the corporate sector.

The checklist provides confirmation that this program is seen as successful not only by the young people in the region, but it also displays 'good practice' in youth literacy and numeracy provision.

Indicator McGuirk (NSW 2001) Appendix 2C	Indicator Descriptor Rationale – Synthesis Appendices A to K	Case Six
1. Your program	Programs for young people must be flexible and challenging in timing and duration	☑
2. Planning your program	Planning for youth literacy programs takes many factors into consideration so that the individual requirements are accounted for and the teacher can be flexible about how outcomes are achieved	☑
3. Strategies and activities	Youth literacy programs require adaptation of the strategies outlined for adult literacy in texts	☑
4. Resources	Youth programs require resources unique to their environment and their goals	☑
5. Learner groupings	Young people's complex needs including and underpinned by literacy needs require careful planning of learner groupings especially where young people are from NESB and Indigenous background	☑
6. Assessment	Young people require feedback on progress and evidence that their participation is worthwhile	☑
7. Outcomes	Best practice pedagogies in youth literacy meet the individual young person's goals and the goals for organisational profile within the complex youth service environment	☑
8. Beliefs about literacy and numeracy	Best practice pedagogies for young learners are matched with their individual goals and focus on the strengths which the learner brings	☑
9. Keeping up to date	Best practice pedagogies for learners who are young people rely on the latest research and discussion about their complex and rapidly changing policy environment	☑
10. Issues and challenges	Best practice programs for young people rely on teachers being positive about change and modelling strategies to meet the challenges	☑

Developed from *Adult literacy and numeracy practices 2001: a national snapshot,* New South Wales, Department of Education & Training, 2001: 12

Table 7: 'Good Practice' in Pedagogies of Youth 'At-Risk' Literacy Programs: Case Study Six

'Good practice'

Case studies have revealed that there is a strong relationship between 'best practice' in adult literacy and numeracy provision as described by McGuirk and her team (NSW, 2001) and the ways in which practitioners of case study programs told their stories of success. More challenging for the programs, however was the relationship between youth development 'good practice' (Ausyouth, 2001a) (See Appendix 2D) and the case studies. Practitioners and educationalists who were underpinning their success with innovative practice, intergenerational learning and cutting edge technologies in brain research and psychodynamic therapies identified more strongly with the youth development indicators of 'good practice'. A workshop at the Youth Literacy Providers Network Conference embraced the youth development framework from *Ausyouth* as a necessary beginning to broadening the adult education discipline and merging two currently distinct communities of practice, those of literacy and numeracy practitioners and those in youth work. These communities and their expertise are relied on by marginalised youth to improve their quality of life and to assist them reach their potential. There is merit in coming together more.

5. Aspects of success

The survey on the ALNARC website offered an opportunity for researchers, policy makers, program managers and practitioners to focus on 'best practice' and its relationships to success in the provision of youth literacy and

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numeracy programs. Requesting a response from the youth perspective to indicators identified in the work of McGuirk (NSW, 2001) provided an indication of whether youth literacy and numeracy provision shares features of 'best practice' with that of the general adult literacy and numeracy provision.

Managing for success:

(See Manager's Survey in Appendix 1)

Twelve managers and one coordinator responded to the web survey. Six were permanent employees, two were contract, one suggested 'other' and four did not respond. Twelve worked for TAFE and one other. Twelve were paid in their roles and one did not respond. Seven were working in Victoria and four in New South Wales. Two did not respond.

Q 2a & 2b: Employment arrangements – 'good practice'

Most managers placed 'very high' and 'high' value on staffing youth literacy programs with permanent or long term contracts. One response was ambivalent and one placed a somewhat low value. Most of the managers required that they provide a youth-friendly atmosphere and saw their staff as contributing to this. One response was ambivalent and two were somewhat low in their attitude to youth friendly atmosphere and age profiling for this.

Q 2c: Teacher stress – 'good practice'

Most managers did not place a 'high' value on minimising the number of employers for whom their staff also worked. Most were ambivalent about the relationship of multiple employers and literacy teachers' stress.

Q 2d, 2e, 2f & 2g: Qualification, experience and professional development – 'good practice'

There was also no clear direction amongst managers as to whether youth literacy components were necessary in the teaching qualifications of staff they employed. On the other hand, most managers employed teachers with experience, suggested that they would be successful with 'at risk' youth and ensured that their staff had access to the most current knowledge of the youth literacy field and their organisational requirements in regard to policy.

Q 2h: Consultation, liaison and collaboration – 'good practice'

Most managers valued 'very high' and 'high' consultation, liaison and collaboration with youth literacy networks.

Q 2i, 2j, 2k, 2l & 2m: Diversity and depth, record keeping learning style match and problem-solving

Most managers rated 'very high' and 'high' that diversity and depth were offered to young people and that record keeping for completion was carried out. Most sought to record non-completion and offered exit interviews with options for young people. All rated 'very high' or 'high' balancing learning styles of individual young people with the teaching practice of their staff. Most rated 'very high' or 'high' their capacity to identify challenges and use a range of strategies to address them to increase effectiveness of their programs.

Q 3: Evaluations – replicating success

All managers responded to listing the kinds of evaluations they used to gauge the success of their programs.

These included:

- Achieving the needs of the students
- Student engagement with programs
- Assessment of literacy/numeracy levels achieved
- Regular interviews with students
- Ongoing study and/or work pathway
- Youth skill in accessing appropriate agency on-going support
- Self-awareness among participants that they have experienced several things of value in at least one part of the youth program offered - and preferably something(s) which can be used without fraudulence or cynicism to demonstrate that your youth program is worth re-funding
- Traditional NRS-type measurements
- Credibility in operating a program that can be converted into a fundable proposition when a new fad in funding rhetoric hits the websites

- Outcomes of public display of client product that get the interest of a viewing or
- An outcome measurement, whether it be a survey, pre or post.
- Student feedback surveys
- Observe randomly class participation
- Incidental feedback from clients about enjoyment/engagement in classes
- Student retention (where appropriate)
- Positive outcomes for students, which include:
    - employment
    - transition to other training and further education programs (ie. maintaining the students in the system until they are ready to take the next step)
    - increased self confidence (personal, and in accessing programs within an adult education environment)
    - increased community and agency networks
    - increased connection with the students' local community.
- Meeting learning outcomes of the curriculum (Certificate in General Education for Adults - modified for the youth program)
- Completion of modules
- Course completion
- Development of interpersonal / intrapersonal skills
- Positive attitude by learners to their program and learning environment
- Satisfaction of staff teaching in program
- Completion of work requirements by students
- Exit interviews regarding program satisfaction
- Non-arrest
- Comparative studies - Institute/State/National/International
- Anecdotal evidence
- Statistics relating to mix of gender, age, location, etc
- Formal evaluations
- Informal feedback

Q 4: Management theory – 'good practice'

Only half of the respondents listed management theorists they used in their inflection of 'good practice' and five participants did not respond to this question. The responses included youth literacy theory rather than 'good practice' management theory. They are as follows:

- *'Fine Print'* type of reading
- Youth Today, Search Institute and others
- Personal contacts
- Alternatives to Violence, Australia
- Youth Justice Board in the UK. UK Plus Program.
- I am unable to name the thinkers/writers who have influenced my management but my philosophy of education incorporates good teaching/learning practices such as:
    - a learning environment where learners are encouraged to understand the process of learning rather than only get the correct answer
    - an environment that encourages self respect and respect for others and where difference is celebrated. Learners need to feel safe
    - learners are working at their own pace and recognising their own successes using diverse teaching methods to cater for different learning styles
    - learners are feeling connected to their learning environment
- Employing teachers who have excellent skills in teaching literacy/numeracy and who enjoy working with "youth at risk"

Q 5 & Q 6: Advisory Committees – 'good practice'

Of the participants who responded to whether their programs used advisory committees, half of the managers suggested they did and half indicated that they did not. One response suggested they had a committee using 'good practice' required by a public health literacy grant. This response appears to have come from North America. Apart from the one response from overseas, the committees used in the programs in the survey did not include young people, their parents or carers. Participants included the following:

- We use a youth development advisory council (YDAC). The makeup of the YDAC is youth statewide, between ages 14-24. They are guided by Public Health Educators. Title V funds can be used to fund this

type of project, focusing on promoting best practice in working with youth with the emphasis on promoting youth development practices
- Program partners
- Australian National Training Authority, Australian Council for Adult Literacy
- Human Services Program Team
- Those working in TAFE programs for disenfranchised youth

Q 7 & Q 8: General networks for information

Most of the participants responded to the question regarding the youth literacy networks they used. These were:

- *'Journal of School Health'* and others
- Brotherhood of St Lawrence
- Corrections Education Association of Victoria
- Adult Education Resource and Information Service
- TAFE Sector
- Schooling contacts
- Personal Literacy contacts
- UK Plus Program.
- Burremah School, Grassmere Youth Services, Uniting Care Connections
- Local Learning and Employment Network
- Victorian Adult Learning and Basic Education Council
- Australian Association of Special Education
- Swinburne Network
- Institute for Youth Education & Community at Victoria University
- Adult Community & Further Education
- National Centre for Vocational Educational Research
- Australian National Training Authority
- Office of Training & tertiary Education (ETTE Initiative Training Support Network)]
- 'Alternatives to Violence' [network]

Q 9: Personal and anonymous comment about management of youth programs

Most of the managers did not participate in the invitation to respond generally and personally in regard to their management of the youth literacy programs. Those who did respond included the following observations:

- The questionnaire is difficult to answer where 'youth-at-risk' are integrated within traditional literacy programs.... and often should be.
- Diverse use of technology (ie. computing / multimedia) encourages participation in the literacy components of the program: often students do not like to 'write', but will produce writing when using computers.
- Where appropriate, integration of literacy and numeracy into the creative components of program (ie. recreation, work education, art, multimedia etc.)
- Unconditional regard of all students (despite challenging behaviours) as the number one underpinning principle
- Always maintain "high" expectations of students (despite difficulties with literacy levels, absenteeism)
- Lots of money as one needs two staff are needed for each class.
- Staff support as it's difficult work
- Ability to be innovative, patient with a careful selection of staff and constant reviewing of programs
- Teachers need to be committed to working with "youth at risk"
- The learning environment must be encouraging for young people and supported by adequate resources.

Summary

In summary, great caution should be exercised with regard to the findings of the web-based questionnaires for literacy and numeracy program managers. Those managers who did respond are generally unaware of 'good practice' as a management tool in youth literacy, at least, the aspects which identified as 'best practice' in the *Adult literacy and numeracy practices 2001: a national snapshot report* (NSW, 2001).

They are, however, very interested in keeping up to date and value this aspect of development in their staff as well. The needs of the funding contract are paramount in the inflection of 'good practice'. These are indicated in the quality assurance required by all registered training organisations accrediting courses with the Australian

Quality Training Framework (AQTF). Record keeping and completion rates are part and parcel of providing 'evidence' and as one observer indicated, of validating funding for the future as uncertainty propels management's engagement in the provision. Given that the managers who accessed the website for youth literacy enjoy high levels of technological connectivity, the management networks they accessed were particular to literacy and numeracy. Management theory does not seem to have informed their practice as managers, however, they are aware of the Australian debates around literacy and seek professional development through journals for literacy practitioners and researchers. The managers do not seem to regard employment relations contribute to 'good practice'. Even though most of the responses came from institutions, permanent staffing was not consistently identified as 'highly' valued. It was suggested that expedience shapes staff recruitment rather 'good practice'.

Teaching for success:

(See Practitioner's Survey in Appendix 1)

Eighteen practitioners – teachers and one trainer - responded to the web survey. Nine were permanently employed, six were on contract, two were casual employees and there was one other. Three worked for government agencies, twelve worked for TAFE, two for a RTO Community provision and one worked for an enterprise/ industry. Sixteen responses indicated that they were in paid employment with two did not respond. Eleven were Victorian, five from NSW and two from South Australia.

Q 2a to Q 2j: Planning a program – 'good practice'

Nearly all respondents valued 'highly' flexibility and challenge in timing and duration planning their programs; all valued 'highly' or 'very highly' the consideration of many factors so that individual requirements are met and the teachers could be flexible about how learning outcomes were met. Except for two responses who saw this as 'least important', all others rated 'average' to 'very high' the ability to adapt literacy texts for young people. There was a similar pattern for the valuing of unique resources for young people and careful planning for learner groupings. Teachers valued 'very high' or 'high' young people's requirement for feedback on assessment and to be assured that their work is valued. Teachers mostly rated 'very high' meeting the individual young person's goals at the same time as meeting those of the organisation as part of a service to young people. However some teachers valued this 'average' to 'least important' to their planning. Most teachers rated 'very high' and 'high' focusing on the strengths of learners and matching individuals to achieve this in the class. Slightly more teachers rated 'average' to 'least important' keeping up with the latest research than teachers who rated this 'high' and 'very high'. Most teachers rated 'high' and 'very high' teachers being positive about change and modelling strategies to meet the challenges of change.

Q 3: Factors that impact on planning

Learners' goals and needs were overwhelmingly the 'most important' of thirteen factors which are under consideration when teachers plan particular programs for young people 'at risk'. The NRS was the 'least' factor considered. Learner's literacy and numeracy practices also ranked from fifth to first in the range of responses. Range and genres of text types did not have a 'very important' value ranging from third to eleventh. Negotiated topics ranged from second to ninth, with textbooks and similar resources having fifth to twelfth in rank. The initial assessment was ranked from first to twelfth in rank when teachers plan their programs with most responses giving this fifth in order overall. Curriculum documents or training packages have a range in rank from fourth to twelfth with most responses rating this tenth, eleventh and twelfth in order. Topics based on previous teaching experience are also ranked from fourth to thirteenth. Most teachers rated from sixth to twelfth maths topics and skills. Workplace tasks and activities are rated in the lower half of the list. Agency presentations also do not figure as important in planning programs for young people.

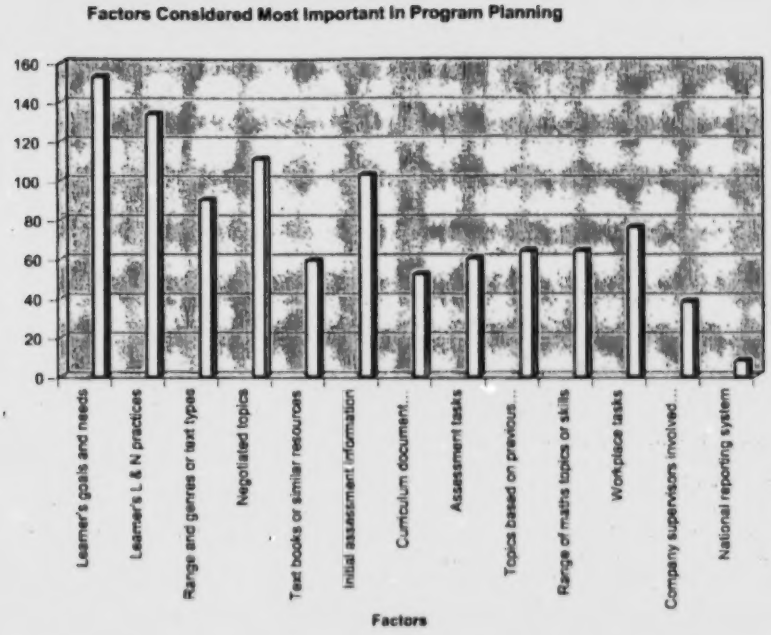

Table 8: Factors Considered Most Important in Program Planning

Q 4: Activities in a 'typical' literacy / numeracy session

Reading was always / sometimes included by teachers who responded to the survey. This was also the case with writing while speaking reflected the similar pattern but with one response indicating that it was rarely part of a session. Learning to learn activities were always / sometimes used in a session, but with listening activities one response indicated listening was rarely part of a session. Critical thinking was always / sometimes part of session, with numeracy reflecting a similar pattern except one response which rarely used this activity in a 'typical' session.

Q 5: Evaluations – gauging success

Only one teacher did not respond to listing the kinds of evaluations they used to measure success.

These included:

- Attendance (requirement for VCE Foundation English) Quality of written work (i.e. demonstration of learning outcomes required by program)
- Observation of learner's strategies, processes, outcomes
- Observation of engagement...possibly disguised...
- Class attendance, interest in class, participation in class discussion, observations of changes in demeanour, assessments completed
- Feedback
- Longevity of person's stay in the program
- A happier person who has increased and developed more social and life skills
- Gaining employment or acceptance into higher vocational course or returning to school
- Competency based assessment tasks
- What has the student moved on to from here
- Has the student shown personal growth?
- Improvement in behaviour of students
- Attitude of students to program and attendance
- Completion of set tasks and course
- Numbers of students continuing study after program completion
- Qualitative - Increased confidence, increased ability to communicate, increased ability to understand and be understood, enthusiasm, willingness to follow instructions and cooperate, increase in self esteem, no motivation and initiative

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· Expressing opinion, group interaction, punctuality, homework completed, grooming improvement (cleaner clothes and washing)
· Survey forms
· More positive attitude to learning, improved skills and planning for the future ie investigating work & or training
· Increase in the student's willingness to begin and/or complete a set task, i.e. to take a risk
· Lively classroom discussion and especially when you hear it still going on outside of the classroom!
· Overt student joy and satisfaction in handing in homework or work completed
· Punctuality and enthusiasm in class
· A happy, sharing, co-operative class where risks can be taken and encouragement is evident both from peers and teachers, e.g. a spontaneous clap of hands when a good poem or prose is shared
· When a student/students bring along resources to share, either related to a current topic or something of their own
· There is an atmosphere/ambience that is hard to put into words - but it is students working happily and co-operatively - the room just feels great
· When I see students making connections with life outside the classroom (e.g. linking prejudice with current immigration policy or reading texts and viewing videos on certain topics without being told do
· Participants embracing learning and assisting others to reach their goals (peer mentorship) whilst successfully working towards their individual goals.
· Evaluation from students and staff
· Attendance and retention patterns
· Constant re evaluation of what we do and readjustment
· Engagement in group projects
· Ability to discuss learning in a 1:1 portfolio interview
· Engagement in class discussions, listening and/or speaking
· Students turning up every day for class
· Students feeling good about themselves and their classmates
· Improvements in students' work
· Renewed focus and attitude

Q 6: Teaching theory in adult and youth literacy – 'good practice'

Just over half the respondents listed thinkers they used to inform their teaching. They included:

· Readings in 'Dusseldorp Skills Forum' and *'Literacy Link'*
· My colleagues and program coordinator
· Literature on dyslexia and ADHD generally has influenced my teaching and learning strategies
· Other workers in the field
· Early mentors were Delia Bradshaw and Pam Baker
· Currently my colleagues at Swinburne
· Articles published in newspapers, and especially *Education Age*

Q 7, Q 8 & Q 9: Advisory structures for 'good practice'

Slightly more responses had advisory committees than did not to inform their programs with three people not responding to the question. None had young people or parents represented preferring other educationalists and youth professionals rather than business or industry.

The responses included:

· Wider college/professional networks
· ALNARC and Language Australia
· TAFE sector, ANTA, ACFE
· TAFE Counsellor
· Centrelink
· Youth officers
· Local support agencies
· Department of Human Services, Family and Community Services and Department of Employment education and Training

Q 10: Networks interested in this research

Most respondents did not respond to this question. The responses included:

· Adult Literacy, TAFE SA, Adelaide TAFE Hindmarsh Square, Adelaide

- Other teachers could benefit from having a better understanding of ADHD and dyslexia and other learning disabilities which contribute to low level literacy skills
- TAFE and private providers of Literacy and Numeracy Training (LANT) program
- Grampians Youth Network
- Access ESD at NSW TAFE

Q 11: Personal and anonymous comment about teaching youth programs

There were nine respondents to this opportunity, while nine did not respond. These included:

- Creative aspects of programs often lead to increased trust for kids to risk literacy skill learning...especially music, art, multimedia etc
- Maintain humour and respect (both ways) and gain trust
- We need more funding, funding, funding
- Money not tied to SCH (student contact hours)
- Age limits to enrolments is also an issue
- AQTF needs are a pain
- Very concerned about people who are dragged in, often sullenly, by parents who want the training allowance. Often the education isn't valued and there is little support in the home for learning. It takes a lot of time and encouragement to get these people to do more than the bare minimum and enjoy their learning experience
- I have only had occasionally one or two youth 'at risk' within adult classes. The modelling that occurs can be very powerful but it has not worked for all. A whole program tailored for youth 'at risk' should combine the classroom type of activities with outside the room activities. Building self esteem is very important
- It is vital to always treat your students as an individual, taking into account their own particular skills at that moment
- It is vital to treat young people with respect and kindness
- Go gently with assessment tasks, especially early on - make sure that they understand that you, the teacher can cope with "literacy" needs, i.e. that you don't wipe them off as learners if there are many mistakes in their work, so they feel free enough to put pen to paper
- Always encourage work completed, if you know they have done their best - no matter how messy and mistake ridden
- Allow and encourage risk taking, sharing, flexible lessons, talking, laughter and relaxation - and you will be rewarded
- If you can "love" your students - I know it is a big request - but you will reap the rewards over and over
- Tracking of individual participants after completion of course and good case management and collaboration between practitioners is essential
- Integrity, long term commitment and the constant and extensive use of personal journals which are responded to by the teachers on a daily basis. My kids write me a letter every day and I write back. We have a personal relationship where they know I am listening to what they have to say. I always say good positive things to them.

Summary

In summary, great caution should be exercised in regard to the findings of the web-based questionnaires for literacy and numeracy practitioners. Most of the practitioners who did respond were permanent or contract employees of the TAFE sector, mainly in Victoria. While institutional provision of literacy and numeracy for marginalised young people is well represented, the emerging field of ACE provision has much lower representation in the findings.

The respondents are very interested in the learning needs of their clients. This drives their programs and their sources of support services and partnerships. Networks within and between government departments are essential to what counts as success. There was understandably, given the dominance of institutional delivery in the responses, a remarkable consensus in the importance of the aspects to take into consideration when planning a literacy and numeracy program. The only aspect which did not uphold this consensus was the importance of keeping up to date on the latest research in youth 'at risk' policy. The ranking of factors that teachers take into consideration when they plan also indicated a spread of opinions. A surprising result was the lack of importance for teachers of curriculum documents, the NRS, presentations from Centrelink, business representatives and youth agencies in their planning. When it came to the kinds of activities a 'typical' session consisted of there was consensus around the list which McGuirk and her team (NSW, 2001) had identified. Reading, speaking, learning to learn and listening were used in on overwhelming number of cases, while writing, critical thinking and numeracy were activities which had high numbers of responses. The opportunity for an anonymous response was

taken up to balance the concepts of 'good practice' underpinning the questionnaire. There was a call for humanity and engagement with young people and a plea to lighten the paperwork for compliance.

Policy and research for success

(See Policymaker's and Researcher's Survey in Appendix 1)

Three policy-makers and / or researchers responded to the web survey. Two were permanent employees and the other reply did not respond to this question. Two were from a government funding agency and one from a university. One was from South Australia and one from Victoria with one not responding to this question.

Policy for programs

There was consensus in the responses to the 'important' or 'very important' value placed on programs for youth 'at risk' being flexible and challenging in timing and duration. This was also the case for the taking in of many factors in the consideration so that individual requirements were accounted for and the teacher could be flexible about how outcomes are achieved. Of 'less importance' rating and of 'average importance' was the need for adaptation of strategies outlined for adult literacy in texts. There was less consensus in the three responses in the importance of teachers carefully planning for learner groupings, but 'very important' and 'important' were the responses to giving young people feedback on their assessment and provide evidence that their participation is worthwhile. No consensus in the three responses was indicated around the concept that 'best practice' required learners' individual goals be met at the same time as those of the organisation within the broad youth service sector. 'Very important' and 'important' were the responses for indicating that 'best practice' pedagogies match individual goals and focus on strengths that the learner brings. There was no consensus about the importance of reliance on the latest research being necessary for 'best practice' pedagogies for youth literacy. Only one response indicated that this was 'very important'. Most of the responses agreed that it was very important for teachers to be positive about change and modelling strategies to meet challenges.

Researchers and policy-makers

Of the three responses, two indicated the researchers and policy-makers who had informed their perspective. The list included Catalano, Putnam, Teese, Dusseldorp Skills Forum, Peter Freebody (Qld), Jane Kenway and Pat Thompson (SA).

Q 4: General networks for information

Two responses were received and the list included:

- Capital Learning and Employment Network
- Melbourne Youth Learning Opportunities
- Youth Affairs Research Network
- Youth Research Centre
- Learning Federation
- Curriculum Corporation
- Universities
- Colleagues in Commonwealth and State education departments in Australia
- Local community and school research projects
- Related initiatives in USA and UK, Ireland.

Q 5: Networks interested in youth literacy and numeracy research

Two responses were received and the list included:

- Youth Affairs Research
- Learning Federation
- Curriculum Corporation
- Universities
- Colleagues in Commonwealth and State education departments around Australia
- Local community and school research projects
- Related initiatives in USA and UK, Ireland.

Q 6: Personal comment about other aspects of 'good practice'

Two responses were received and the list included:

- The importance of literacy in the individual gaining success in all other life aspects and for life chances
- Youth as agents of social change

- The specific use of new literacies and numeracies
- Gender implications.

Summary

In summary, extreme caution should be exercised in the regard to the findings of the web-based questionnaires for literacy and numeracy policy-makers and researchers. In general, the policy-makers and researchers supported the 'best practice' indicators identified by McGuirk and her team (NSW, 2001) for planning programs to meet the needs of literacy and numeracy for youth 'at risk'. The policy makers and researchers were well supported by international and Australian networks.

Participating for success

Young people participating in programs offered their considerable wisdom in what constitutes success and where changes could be instituted to break down the barriers to gaining literacy and numeracy skills in school. What follows are the results of three focus groups based on current classes of literacy and numeracy programs.

Focus group 1: Metropolitan success

Negotiating success in an urban environment with high youth unemployment is not easy especially if you stopped attending while still in primary school. A group of very young people, most under eighteen years of age, provided an insight into the issues and the barriers. Of the group of six marginalised young people, two suggested that there was no need to have plans. The others had identified local casual employment they would like to pursue. Obviously they enjoyed coming to the Centre and did not miss a session if numeracy, reading and writing were on the timetable. The two young people with no immediate plans suggested that success for them would come with the decriminalisation of marijuana as that would address a number of issues for young people in their area. Of the group who provided ideas about how they would measure success, they said that to realise their employment ambitions would be a measure. Their plans included working with young children because of previous experiences with Girl Guides, becoming a baker and gaining an apprenticeship as a diesel mechanic. A limitation on this success for the young people in the focus group was their reticence to move out of their area for education, training or employment as they had indicated that the reliance on public transport forms a barrier to their aspirations.

After the focus group discussion, the MIPs (Managed Individual Pathways) worker discussed her role and the issues the young people have identified with her. Under her current contract, fifteen hours of contact across three sites in the ACE sector provided the basis for generating action plans for a case load of ninety young people 'at risk' of leaving the education system. She was not surprised that the group was so forthcoming as she indicated that some in the group had as many as twelve case managers. On average a young person manages six case managers. Her admiration for the young people in the youth program was based on the fact that no matter what their experiences of family, household, community and school life, they had not given up on learning despite their constant fear that they would descend into mental illness prevalent in their households.

Observing the discussion, the program coordinator was amazed that up until now, no one had taken the young people's hopes and aspirations expressed during the session further. It was only later when the MIPS worker indicated the number of case managers in some of the young people's lives, that the amazement became clear. She said that her attendance one day a week often missed the young people with many appointments impacting on their attendance in class.

Focus group 2: Outer metropolitan success

The environment of positive support and acceptance was fundamental to the successes which participants in the outer metropolitan group had achieved in their literacy and numeracy program. They responded to the non-judgemental attitude of the teachers and the first name basis of learning in the community setting. They contrasted this with places where past misdemeanours were never forgotten, recycled year after year, impacting negatively on individual motivation. To be encouraged by teachers and their peers and to rely on your own motivation, participants thought, kept the pace up on their learning. They caught up on their previous lack of performance in this setting. They acknowledged that mates at school can be good fun but they can also take up time and distract one's focus on learning.

One participant identified that it was a relief to have his learning difficulties analysed and, more importantly, to go back to the basics to begin catching up. Another indicated that staving off boredom was not necessary in a community environment where one worked at an individual learning plan and was surrounded by teachers who wanted to be working in the community and who expressed values respecting young people's contribution to their community. They appreciated that teachers explained the reasons for learning particular topics before

beginning so that the young people's reticence about the relevance of the subject could be discussed and resolved.

For those young people who did not have the support of family for their decisions, they appreciated that people who were supportive of learning and interested in their progress and future goals were essential to their engagement. The participants liked that learning was negotiated and that, once agreements were put in place, the small stages involved in the progress to the goals could also be negotiated. They liked this working to plan and the fact that the journey was not an individual matter but one shared with teachers and others in the group work. They appreciated the boundaries set around the negotiated agreements and to have the freedom to act within those boundaries.

Lack of transport was regarded as a barrier to attaining further education and employment for young people in this region. There was no reliable transport system that could assist their reaching a TAFE Institute that might have courses they wished to pursue. Employment locally was very limited and often required Year 12, not matter how low the level of skills required. The suggestion was that there could be a provisional driver's licence for young people under eighteen years of age. This would be useful for those who live in areas where access to education is limited so that they could drive to and from a relevant TAFE Institute and only for that purpose. Another limitation to access of employment locally was the welfare benefit category the young people found themselves assigned to which was *Youth Allowance* as they had to stand in line behind other priority categories for employment. Without the relevant classification, Centrelink and employers were not interested in their willingness to work. Again, they saw that the limited range of opportunities and welfare policy exacerbated their chances of continuing to live in the region.

They pointed out that education had become a business for profit in many cases and identified expensive courses where low level qualifications were conferred with no likelihood of employment after having spent the money. Participants discussed the use of networks to gain access to work experience that might lead to a job – not *what* you knew but *who* you knew. One participant indicated that relying on family businesses for apprenticeships might not be the answer, however. All agreed that they were hoping for a stable life, to be surrounded by love, be happy and have enough money in their pockets. They wanted to move on from this setting after their successes in gaining their qualifications.

Focus group 3: Regional success

A regional initiative to support young people while still attending school was the secret to the successes identified by the regional focus group. Being happy and having a good job and being good at it also figured in success. Being comfortable with who she was and gaining a VCE to get a job, buy a house and bring up her daughter also contributed to a definition of success for a young mother. Being successful in resisting slurs from teachers who suggested that they would not amount to anything was also key. This resistance by young people whose needs were not being met at school, lead to seeking out local organisations. Programs such as the Jobs Pathways Programme, the New Apprenticeship Programme through the Group Training Scheme, the LEAP Institute program and the Optimal Learning Program were sought out. They could support young people in realising their dreams by providing the requisite literacy and numeracy programs and by acknowledging their strengths and emotional needs.

The young people identified a range of aspects where barriers to good teaching had prevented their learning. They identified with teachers who were gifted and who listened to young people's feelings; with younger teachers able to identify with their concerns and able to explain issues they may have with their learning in words the young people understood. The young people identified that in programs where they were given the responsibility for their learning, and the assessment tasks were taken very seriously and all work contributed to the overall assessment such as that in competency based programs, the greater the success for them personally. 'Experiential learning' or learning through projects and activities was valued by the group. A member who had suggested to a local school principal that a class group could plan and maintain the school garden was genuinely concerned that this offer was not acted on.

Success was hindered in English in the opinion of some members when this subject was taught through English literature, often not Australian, and poetry which was not valued by the young people. One young man said that from an early age, he was only prepared to read material relevant to the job he had in mind. This effectively eliminated all set novels and poetry. Small classes, relevant texts and continual reinforcement of the basics were the keys to success.

The group was scathing in their criticism of the value placed on sport in high schools. One young person, who was not yet eighteen years of age, had given up running which he had loved because, after he had won his first race at high school, teachers constantly raised his sporting prowess even though he was asking for help with his

numeracy or literacy. Other group members were in agreement that being good at sport had minimised teachers' concerns about their literacy and numeracy issues. Other group members who had musical talents suggested that these were rarely valued except as entertainment on sport awards nights!

The group members identified the range of programs they had accessed to deal with their literacy and numeracy issues especially the therapeutic programs offering them a sense of themselves as learners with strategies. Some accessed these programs at school and some through outside organisations. Young people who had left primary school without the ability to read were particularly pleased when teachers gave them word attack skills, including phonics, as a way to deal with the incomprehensible. Those who had struggled with maths were pleased that, through learning more about their learning style, they had strategies for developing number skills and using formulae.

Schools with hi-tech surveillance systems where young people were not trusted and the property of the school was not respected were contrasted with those colleges with smaller classes, immediate teacher response to requests for assistance, where the basics were reinforced. The group suggested that an adult learning environment gave greater responsibility and respect for the young learners.

The young people in the focus group suggested that professional development where students discussed with teachers the ways in which current programs could better meet their needs would be useful for improving the class activities and the involvement of teachers.

It is clear that not all programs are valued equally by young people. They learn by word of mouth which have the expertise and are responsive to young people. The young people attempt to manage ineffective conduct on the part of these agencies through using advocates in their schools to demand better service. Clearly the number of such agencies is an emerging and urgent problem. The privacy legislation prevents agencies collaborating on their own undertaking, as the permission of the young person or their agent must be gained for information to be shared. This provides a confusing array of support and often a young person will not apply for their rightful entitlement as it will automatically prevent them from using a program where they are experiencing success and feeling respected. This also results in a particular young person managing several case managers in several organisations.

Summary

The relationship between the discussion around success and 'good practice' in management and teaching in youth literacy programs are represented below in two tables. Those areas where the young people mentioned these aspects and were in agreement are identified.

Organisation Indicator McGuirk (NSW 2001) Appendix 2C	Indicator Descriptor Rationale Synthesis Appendices A to K and Evaluation of Full Service Schools Program reports	Focus groups
1. Staff	Best practice organisations staff their programs with personnel from a variety of backgrounds	☑
2. Age	Young people have suggested they would like young people or people who know youth culture and can relate to their lives	☑
3. Multiple employers – teachers working for more than one program	Youth expressed enjoyment of teachers who are fun and calming in their approach who can take a joke Innovative teachers in youth programs know the ropes in systems and can bend the rules if necessary to gain outcomes for young people	☑
4. Teaching qualifications	Programs for young people require teachers with qualifications in youth studies and youth literacy	
5. Teaching experience	Young people are attracted to an adult learning environment – individualised programs are the most effective	☑
6. Professional development	Resources are becoming stretched, youth literacy practitioners will have to find innovative ways to operate across the many policy changes	☑
7. Keeping up to date	Best practice in youth service requires currency in all aspects because of complexity, pace and size of change in the sector	☑
8. Consultation, liaison & collaboration	Best practice in the youth service field requires literacy and numeracy program managers to liaise with other youth service providers and government agencies	☑

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Organisation Indicator McGuirk (NSW 2001) Appendix 2C	Indicator Descriptor Rationale Synthesis Appendices A to K and Evaluation of Full Service Schools Program reports	Focus groups
9. Your programs for young people	Programs for young people must be flexible and challenging in timing and duration	☑
10. Outcomes	Programs for young people must seek to complete modules, meet organisational goals and create an atmosphere of excitement and continuous improvement	☑
11. Program completion / retention rates	Programs for young people rely on adaptability to overcome the complex reasons for non-completion	☑
12. Beliefs about literacy	Balance of beliefs among staff to match with requirements of learner Young people require highly individualised programs and strong bonds of respect from their teachers	☑
13. Issues and challenges	Youth literacy programs arise and occur in the most challenging of program areas. The profiles of young people across a range of government areas makes for complex service delivery	☑

Developed from *Adult literacy and numeracy practices 2001: a national snapshot,* New South Wales, Department of Education & Training, 2001: 12

Table 9: 'Good Practice' in Management of Youth 'At-Risk' Literacy Programs: Focus groups' response

Program Indicator McGuirk (NSW, 2001) Appendix C	Indicator Descriptor Rationale Synthesis Appendices A to K and Evaluation of Full Service Schools Program reports	Focus groups
1. Your program	Programs for young people must be flexible and challenging in timing and duration	☑
2. Planning your program	Planning for youth literacy programs takes many factors into consideration so that the individual requirements are accounted for and the teacher can be flexible about how outcomes are achieved	☑
3. Strategies and activities	Youth literacy programs require adaptation of the strategies outlined for adult literacy in texts	☑
4. Resources	Youth programs require resources unique to their environment and their goals	☑
5. Learner groupings	Young people's complex needs including and underpinned by literacy needs require careful planning of learner groupings especially where young people are from NESB and Indigenous background	☑
6. Assessment	Young people require feedback on progress and evidence that their participation is worthwhile	☑
7. Outcomes	Best practice pedagogies in youth literacy meet the individual young person's goals and the goals for organisational profile within the complex youth service environment	☑
8. Beliefs about literacy and numeracy	Best practice pedagogies for young learners are matched with their individual goals and focus on the strengths which the learner brings	☑
9. Keeping up to date	Best practice pedagogies for learners who are young people rely on the latest research and discussion about their complex and rapidly changing policy environment	☑
10. Issues and challenges	Best practice programs for young people rely on teachers being positive about change and modelling strategies to meet the challenges	☑

Developed from *Adult literacy and numeracy practices 2001: a national snapshot,* New South Wales, Department of Education & Training, 2001: 12

Table 10: 'Good Practice' in Pedagogies of Youth 'At-Risk' Literacy Programs: Focus groups' response

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The conclusion which can be drawn is that young Victorian people discussing what succeeds for them confirmed a melding of the adult literacy and numeracy best practice indicators with the descriptors drawn from various government reports identifying 'good practice' in youth programs. Certainly, the foundation is there in the discourses of the stakeholders - participants in the literacy and numeracy programs, practitioners and managers - that a unique literacy field is being created through their efforts and their stories. While it may be a very complex area within which to work, there are tools becoming available to the field to support those practitioners in their efforts to reflect 'good practice' and ensure success and good governance at the same time.

It is becoming urgent that unless schools, VCE and VET and employment programs provide staff and resources that allow personnel within the programs meet these indicators, young people will continue to leave those environments that are not meeting their needs to seek learning elsewhere to achieve their success.

5. Issues and challenges

This chapter of the report describes some current issues and challenges faced by both managers and teachers aligned to those indicators of 'best practice' (NSW, 2001) in the case study sites described in chapter three. Generally speaking it is hopeful, for youth literacy and numeracy programs whose goals are transformative to note, at the outset, that 'best practice' is a technique with transformative potential. It has the capacity for exercising Foucauldian 'governmentality' (or citizens' resistance through discourse) as well as being a device to record good governance of youth literacy and numeracy provision. The discourses around 'best practice' are currently dominating others around pedagogy and policy. This report includes the synthesised discourses of managers, practitioners and young people who have used or are using literacy and numeracy programs.

A management perspective on issues and challenges

While aligning the issues and challenges against the indicators for good management of youth literacy programs, the youth sector and literacy and numeracy field must not lose sight of the overall goal of improving the systems of transition from initial education to working life. Each aspect of management of youth 'at risk' based on the work of McGuirk and her team (NSW, 2001) is listed and the situation as related by the case study interviews, the surveys of managers and the young people's discussion and interpreted by the researcher is outlined. The list of aspects of organisational management derived for youth literacy programs follows:

- 'Best practice' organisations staff their programs with personnel from a variety of backgrounds
- 'Best practice' organisations recruit staff to ensure a safe and friendly atmosphere for young people with balance and age mix including young people
- 'Best practice' managers minimise teacher stress by offering substantial contracts to practitioners
- Programs for young people require teachers with qualifications in youth studies and youth literacy
- Young people are attracted to an adult learning environment – individualised programs are the most effective
- Resources are becoming stretched, youth literacy practitioners will have to find innovative ways to operate across the many policy changes
- 'Best practice' in youth service requires currency in all aspects because of the complexity, pace and size of change in the sector
- Best practice in youth service requires literacy and numeracy program managers liaise with other youth service providers and government agencies
- Programs for young people must be flexible and challenging in timing and duration
- 'Best practice' management in youth literacy identifies the goals for organisational profile within the complex youth service environment
- Programs for young people rely on adaptability to overcome the complex reasons for non-completion
- Balance of beliefs among staff to match with the requirements of the learner. Young people require highly individualised programs and strong bonds of respect from their teachers
- Youth literacy programs arise and occur in the most challenging of program areas. The profile of young people across a range of government areas makes for complex service delivery.

The case study interviews, responses to the surveys of managers and the focus group discussions identified a number of management issues and suggested strategies for meeting the challenges. The 'best practice' descriptors derived from the work of McGuirk and her team (NSW, 2001) are listed in italics. The researcher has drawn on the data to substantiate the support of these in literacy and numeracy programs.

Staff

'Best practice' organisations staff their programs with personnel from a variety of backgrounds.

Managers of provision at the case study sites indicated that this was indeed the case. Team approaches are ways in which successful programs address the complex needs of marginalised young people. Expertise in the team may include literacy and numeracy (from the primary and secondary sectors), youth work, psychotherapy, counselling, complementary therapies, retail, hospitality, recreation, welfare, community and fine arts. The use of the *Certificate IV in Workplace Assessment and Training* while controversial, as its literacy and numeracy component is minimal, can be effective in assembling the team. A well-resourced team approach is also sustainable in terms of managing and addressing the levels of stress experienced by teachers in working with marginalised young people.

Age

Young people have suggested they would like young people or people who know youth culture and can relate to their lives as teachers.

Many practitioners commented that the current workforce was ageing and were concerned that few new recruits were entering the field. The young people in focus groups mentioned that they did not comprehend the words which older teachers used and found that the way younger teachers talked and the fact that they could take a joke was very much appreciated. The young people suggested that there needed to be shared professional development between teachers and marginalised young people to address this communication breakdown fundamental to 'good practice' in pedagogy.

Number of employers

'Best practice' managers minimise teacher stress by offering substantial contracts to practitioners.

Practitioners at the case study sites raised the concern that casualisation of the youth literacy and numeracy workforce affects the opportunities for growing and innovation in current programs. Casual teachers have little opportunity to take on different hours or increase their hours in response to the organisation's goals. The demands of family and community restrict their involvement in program development. In many instances, program coordinators who may have a contract of employment take on tasks which they are reticent to require of practitioners who may be paid only as a casual or on a sessional basis. The stress that this causes sees many highly regarded practitioners and managers leaving the field. Young people expressed enjoyment of teachers who are fun and calming in their approach.

Teaching qualifications

Programs for young people require teachers with qualifications in youth studies and youth literacy

Managers at case study sites recruited teachers from a range of organisations, based on reputation in the district or institution and their rapport with young people but not necessarily with youth studies in their qualification. As youth literacy is an emerging discipline area in the field, case study managers placed emphasis on availability of updating and sharing information within networks already trusted for advice and professional development rather than recruiting specific youth qualifications. Teaching qualifications in primary education was regarded as essential should the young people presenting require basic phonics and word attack skills. Teaching qualifications in secondary and vocational education were seen as necessary should engagement in education and experiential learning be required.

Teaching experience

Young people are attracted to an adult learning environment – individualised programs are the most effective

Teachers and trainers who have experience of establishing and maintaining rapport with individual learners, who understand their strengths and learning styles, their temperament and compatibility with other learners and the commitment to support the young person through their crises achieve the most effective results. Managers of programs placed importance on each young person being able to make informed decisions about services and options available especially given the constantly changing programs at all levels of government and across participating departments.

Professional development

Resources are becoming stretched, youth literacy practitioners will have to find innovative ways to operate across the many policy changes

Managers at case study sites indicate that the processes at the three levels of government for seeking, establishing and maintaining regional networks in government, business and community are at unmanageable levels. There are too many initiatives in social welfare, community services, human services, health, education and VET with constant emerging programs, grant schemes, pilot schemes distracting recurrent resources from establishing a profile and gaining support for sustainable and ongoing provision. A grant has established a national literacy providers' network coordinated from Victoria. At the time of writing support from institutional providers and community education centres is growing offering web-based chat and information sharing. It is salutary to note that as connectivity and technological infrastructure may not be available to or desired by all practitioners the field still values and relies on face to face workshops.

Keeping up to date

'Best practice' in youth service requires currency in all aspects because of the complexity, pace and size of change in the sector

Current information about which marginalised young people can make informed decisions and plan their futures is a key to success. Partnerships are strategies to meet the diverse needs of young people. Successful programs will only maintain networks that continue to assist and have outcomes for their clients. Personnel are constantly changing in response to the generation of new youth services and funded short term projects which impacts on the effectiveness and the longevity of any particular partnership.

A recent initiative, MIPs, whereby young people are supported in developing and undertaking action plans for their transition pathway has been welcomed. The caseload of personnel, however, would indicate that only superficial aid is possible especially in the ACE sector. The objective is to form partnerships between and across education and training providers at the regional levels to provide coherent pathways.

Lamb and Mackenzie (2001) in tracking the experiences of young people in Year 10 in 1992, suggest that regional youth priorities have been in constant flux preferring 'working patterns' to 'pathways'. In Australia, this results in a transition period for young people extending over many years. They found that this involves a young person in hundreds of patterns of un/employment, underemployment, labour market programs, education and training configurations over the seven year period.

Consultation, liaison and collaboration

Best practice in youth service requires that literacy and numeracy program managers liaise with other youth service providers and government agencies

Case study sites indicate that this is a very controversial area within 'best practice'. Privacy legislation impacts on the capacity of organisations to share information without the express permission of the young person. This results in information important to program planning being withheld from teachers and managers. It is also possible for young people to be 'overserviced' by a number of agencies who are unaware that others are also attempting to assist. This legislation also impacts on young people who are incarcerated as the same provisions mean that although case managers meet around particular young people, they may not be permitted by their organisations to share information, particular to an individual young person.

Generally speaking, however, collaboration of services is fundamental for participants in literacy and numeracy programs. This means having access to information of services available locally so that they may make informed decisions about the services which they require and from which they will receive the most benefit.

The programs

Programs for young people must be flexible and challenging in timing and duration

Managers at case study sites indicate that short sessions where young people can attend and receive relevant feedback and whose contribution is valued and continuously assessed is very effective. This was particularly remarked on in the focus groups. Intensive learning can be a circuit breaker for those young people who have taken up substance abuse and the drug economy through lack of activity in school breaks. Short sessions also accommodate the casual employment of participants. The focus groups also appreciated the smaller class sizes in VET and ACE where teachers responded immediately to their concerns allowing them to be more productive during their class activities. Some teachers also used the breaks to talk with individual young people, to better understand their temperament and the best way to build on their strengths.

Outcomes

'Best practice' management in youth literacy identifies the goals for organisational profile within the complex youth service environment

While this indicator is fundamental to positioning literacy and numeracy issues as underpinning success of other services for young people, the resources to take up the regional activity around these networks did not have a priority given the organisational requirements for focus on participants. The initiative of the LLENs has identified that youth literacy underpins their goals for young people, however, program coordinators of literacy and numeracy programs especially in the ACE sector have not the resources to actively become engaged.

Program completion

Programs for young people rely on adaptability to overcome the complex reasons for non-completion

Managers at case study sites relied on the ingenuity and commitment of their teachers to ensure that the young people completed their program and were given pathways into further courses and higher level literacy and numeracy programs through aligning relevant framework curriculum. The issue for Victorian providers, especially in the ACE sector, was the TAFE voucher of 400 student contact hours as the amount of government subsidised training permissible for each young person. For a marginalised young person with multiple and complex issues to address, this funding allocation was insufficient. Should the young person have enrolled in a college program, left and approached a community-based program, no government subsidy was possible. The evidence would suggest programs should be provided with funding which recognises the time taken to address the issues of engagement as well as progress in literacy and numeracy skills. Unfunded provision is increasing especially in programs where there is a policy that no one is turned away.

An allied issue for case study sites is younger people approaching colleges and community programs. TAFE and the ACE sectors are not funded for young people under fifteen years of age. Children as young as twelve years of age are approaching services for literacy and numeracy programs. These children have identified that large classes impact adversely on their productivity and seek those areas of the education system which permit lower class sizes and underpin delivery with adult learning principles which are attractive to young people.

Beliefs about literacy

Balance of beliefs among staff to match with the requirements of the learner. Young people require highly individualised programs and strong bonds of respect from their teachers

Managers attempted to recruit a diverse staffing profile and professionals who respected young people. The nature of the funding, often not secure from one year to the next, impacts on the levels of commitment managers can expect of their staff and their accommodation for this, when the employee is offered employment elsewhere to maximise their chances of an ongoing income. As interests of young people alter from year to year and group to group, the fluidity of employment may assist this requirement, but with the loss of staff, the skill mix of teams may alter dramatically. A team approach well supported with resources and where each young person's work and progress is important is the basis for respect and an organisational approach which achieves success.

Issues and challenges

Youth literacy programs arise and occur in the most challenging of program areas. The profile of young people across a range of government areas makes for complex service delivery

Case study sites indicate that ingenuity has to be applied in seeking funding which addresses the diverse range of issues. Parental awareness and engagement should also be encouraged, not only to support the young person's learning and changes but to provide contexts for intergenerational learning. Quite often parents are very young and have also left school before being exposed to the new literacies, one of which is the language around the radically changing education system and the high levels of unemployment for young people.

While bureaucratic coordination initiatives at the local government level are welcomed, they are of little benefit when the sheer number of youth programs at all government levels is unmanageable. There is a cynicism abroad that bureaucratic paperwork and high profile committees perpetuate discourses that cannot be substantiated in reality.

The review by the OECD (1997) suggests that with consistently low growth rates over the past ten years, Australia will not witness the job creation necessary to absorb young people into the labour market. Though the review team had seen improvements over a ten year period, it concluded that the pace of change was not commensurate with the challenge facing the Australian youth services and education systems. Recent Victorian statistics were produced at the Youth Literacy and Numeracy Providers Conference in Melbourne. The General

Manager, Post-compulsory Pathways and Projects, Office of Portfolio Integration suggested that estimates of the numbers of marginalised young people under eighteen years of age neither in employment or education and training is now in excess of 10,000. This is much higher than predicted when the change to Commonwealth benefits such as *Youth Allowance* was first announced.

A teaching perspective on issues and challenges

The case study interviews, survey responses from practitioners and focus groups of discussions with young people identified a number of issues around planning literacy and numeracy sessions and suggested strategies for meeting the challenges. Each indicator of best practice from the work of McGuirk and her team (NSW, 2001) (See Appendix 2C) for teaching in a literacy and numeracy program is listed and the current situation as related by the case study sites, the surveys of practitioners and the young people's discussion and interpreted by the researcher is outlined. The list of indicators derived for youth literacy programs is as follows:

- Programs for young people must be flexible and challenging in timing and duration
- Planning for youth literacy takes many factors into consideration so that individual requirements are accounted for and the teacher can be flexible about how outcomes can be achieved.
- Youth literacy programs require adaptation of the strategies outlined for adult literacy in texts
- Youth programs require resources unique to their environment and their goals
- Young people's complex needs including and underpinned by literacy needs require careful planning of learner groupings especially when young people from NESB and Indigenous background are involved
- Young people require feedback on progress and evidence that their participation is worthwhile
- 'Best practice' pedagogies in youth literacy meet the individual young person's goals and the goals for organisational profile within the complex youth service environment
- 'Best practice' pedagogies for young learners are matched with their individual goals and focus on strengths which the learner brings
- 'Best practice' pedagogies for learners who are young people rely on the latest research and discussion about their complex and rapidly changing policy environment
- 'Best practice' programs for young people rely on teachers being positive about change and modelling strategies to meet challenges

Program

Programs for young people must be flexible and challenging in timing and duration

Teachers identified that the time which the Victorian government subsidised for literacy and numeracy programs, especially in the ACE sector, was insufficient to meet the challenges in planning appropriate programs to meet their needs of the marginalised young people. Time is required as well as commitment by staff to provide individualised programs encouraging success through patience, periods of intense counselling and out of hours support. Successful teachers are highly flexible about the place and time of classes and individual engagement. The stress of this pedagogy demands strong professional support mechanisms for debriefing when the challenges overwhelm both young person and teacher.

Planning the program

Planning for youth literacy takes many factors into consideration so that individual requirements are accounted for and the teacher can be flexible about how outcomes can be achieved.

Planning in this way demands resources – time and funds as well as considerable expertise and team building. Just as the needs of marginalised young people demand a holistic response, so too does the organisation need to support teachers as they plan such a program. They need support of their colleagues to continue to be active in such programs. Catering for different learning styles and temperaments of young people, offering complementary therapies and psychotherapy and negotiating the use of physical space with all participants contribute to individualising the program. Many literacy and numeracy programs in schools and in the community are using these 'soft skills' and knowledge to achieve success in learning through a pace of achievement young people have not hitherto experienced.

Strategies and activities

Youth literacy programs require adaptation of the strategies outlined for adult literacy in texts

Practitioners have welcomed the reaccreditation of the CGEA as they have identified that the framework forms the basis of pathways to VCE, VET and employment. It has the flexibility to provide for activities to engage young people. This curriculum may also be mapped for reporting for national contracts. Learning resources

which support the framework and are of interest to young people are emerging. Caution has to be taken by practitioners, however, in ensuring that the goals and interests of individual young people are not compromised by 'off the shelf' topics. Local issues may be more engaging with a potential for reforming and challenging tradition and existing prejudices about marginalised young people. Research (Turner, 2000) indicates that there is great potential in action based literacy and numeracy programs.

Pilot projects trialing the VCAL also indicate that a partnership approach can provide opportunities. They encourage local expertise and resources to be focused on the individual needs of young people. VCAL has the potential to adapt elements of local business, community, the VET and school systems. There is potential to create jobs for young people through opportunities to work in the community, with local business recognizing the skills learned in community environments.

A framework curriculum for further education, *Transforming Lives: Transforming Communities* further analyses humanistic goals, not only from a business perspective but also from the points of view of community and citizen. This framework provides opportunities to align VET training packages and curriculum with capacities for citizenship to effect environmental, social and economic sustainability. This values-based curriculum framework has much to offer those practitioners who seek to underpin their programs with Habermasian *communicative reason* encouraging men and women of good will to action. It also provides a framework for those practitioners who celebrate the Foucauldian concepts of *governmentality*. In cases such as these, marginalised young people who have acquired literacy and numeracy competencies mandated by government policy utilise critical literacies to press their claims to public resources. In this way, they can force reform of administrative law, policies and procedures and challenge market forces restricting the employment of young people who have disabilities or are from low socio-economic backgrounds (Sercombe, 1993).

Resources

Youth programs require resources unique to their environment and their goals

Case study interviews indicate that success for young people is grounded in this 'best practice' indicator. Ingenious use of local resources, including political resources, can profile marginalised young people's achievements and goals. Enterprising schools and colleges are activating networks to advocate for the involvement and support of local business and industry. For so long, business stakeholders have indicated that the levels of many young people's literacy and numeracy are insufficient for the purpose of the continuous improvement and business systems which are mandated currently by corporate and government activity. Research suggests that business and industry can do more to support young people and case study research suggests that literacy and numeracy programs, and the organisations which provide these, are increasingly approaching business to play a role in the engagement of marginalised young people.

Learner groupings

Young people's complex needs including and underpinned by literacy needs require careful planning of learner groupings especially where young people are from NESB and Indigenous backgrounds

Practitioners use assessment tools and processes from cognitive psychology and psychotherapy to provide ways of encouraging self-awareness in young people. Learner groupings are aspects of a constellation of information which practitioners use in encouraging marginalised young people to accept responsibility for their own learning. Consultation with parents and communities becomes strategic in effective provision of a learning environment especially for NESB and Indigenous young people. 'Best practice' indicators for Indigenous education (Appendix 2K) confront many of the requirements of the technologies for administering VET and thus present a challenge for practitioners to meet the expectations of communities as well as the requirements of government contracts.

Assessment

Young people require feedback on progress and evidence that their participation is worthwhile

The focus groups and practitioners see this as the aspect distinguishing adult learning in a competency based training environment from school-based assessment. They welcome continuous assessment as it produces continuous and responsive feedback and they attribute the pace of their learning to both the practitioner and the learner becoming engaged in their learning.

Outcomes

'Best practice' pedagogies in youth literacy meet the individual young person's goals and the goals for organisational profile within the complex youth service environment

Those programs demonstrating to individual young people that learning is engaging, relevant and fun have no trouble filling classes and waiting lists usually apply. Local youth services also seek out these programs as youth workers and welfare officers see the fundamental role that literacy and numeracy competencies play in addressing a number of issues young people face in housing, health, finance, juvenile justice and personal relationships. Unless literacy and numeracy providers collaborate with youth services and government agencies, their participants will not realise their goals and address the complex issues in their lives. Maintaining funding of popular institutions, including the ACE sector, demands that stakeholders in the community acknowledge and value not only the skills and contribution of marginalised young people but also the agencies and educational programs serving their needs.

Beliefs about literacy and numeracy

'Best practice' pedagogies for young learners are matched with their individual goals and focus on strengths the learner brings

Practitioners indicate that frequently marginalised young people do not identify their strengths and have temperaments that often means they are reticent to resist and challenge dominant discourses about their self worth and their capacity to learn. Literacy and numeracy practitioners emphasise in discussions that teachers should value the work handed in, should genuinely complement students on their achievements and ensure that they create a comfortable learning environment where each individual can reach their potential. Respecting young people's values and goals and gaining their endorsement for learning activities and assessment are fundamental to a successful program. Respect as an adult, focused on their learning, is what marginalised young people seek out and respond to in organisations and a learning environment.

Keeping up to date

'Best practice' pedagogies for learners who are young people rely on the latest research and discussion about their complex and rapidly changing policy environment

Participants at the Youth Literacy Providers Network Conference identified this as the most pressing need. The capacity to share understandings of a field that is rapidly growing and to discuss program development alongside professional activities is welcomed. The pace of change is an issue, along with the appropriate strategies for reaching a casualised workforce with little capacity for gaining leave to attend workshops and information sessions.

Issues and challenges

'Best practice' programs for young people rely on teachers being positive about change and modelling strategies to meet challenges

Literacy and numeracy providers presented as professionals keen to assist young people against increasing odds. While there is not a large body of research, those local providers who have been responding to the increasing need in the past decade have much to celebrate. They can see greater recognition for their efforts evidenced in recent initiatives in Victoria as well as the successes of graduates from their programs.

6. Conclusion

The preparation of future citizens for representative and participatory democracies such as Australia cannot be left to chance. As Habermas suggests in theory, directions need to be set through discussion. These need to result from negotiation between money and administrative power (at the centre) and stakeholders, locally. In following Habermas's model, the administration of transport, youth services and literacy and numeracy programs in Victoria needs to bring the 'life world' of marginalised young people and their communities into the facts for the negotiation. Laws, policies and procedures need to rebuild the porous structures of youth transition systems no longer sustainable and to address isolation and access to create better futures for young people.

Complex issues and learner needs used to be addressed at local discretion. Programs have been compromised by the dominance of literacy and numeracy and knowledge economy discourses according to Henry and Taylor (1999. These have heralded cuts in broader learning support services within educational institutions. While providers seek partnerships, often these cannot be achieved in particular regions because of the underlying impacts of marketisation (Marginson, 1998). Policy makers need to come to grips with the public purposes of education. Contracting out government services for young people has led to increasing fragmentation of programs. This impacts on the effectiveness of literacy and numeracy provision and what young people say counts as success. It is clear that unless education and transport infrastructure and curriculum range is increased,

an action plan will not a pathway make. For many young people in urban as well as non-metropolitan settings, product range varies and the lack of transport systems impedes access.

Youth literacy providers need to press for funding to attract young people, often young women, who are struggling but not attracted to education as the social and cultural barriers are so invincible. Policy also needs to ensure that young people who have become disengaged from school, and are not learning in traditional programs, have appropriate opportunities and do not find themselves solely in literacy programs because that is the only government subsidised program available locally. Youth literacy and numeracy policy needs to actively encourage innovations using the latest research on complementary therapies and the fusion of Eastern and Western philosophies so that young people are not restricted in their development. Intergenerational learning also needs to be placed on the policy agenda to overcome parental confusion about the future young people face and to promote community responsibility for the socio-economic well being of young people in partnership with government.

There are five fundamental challenges for government reform of literacy provision for young people in the future. First, to reform the marketisation of the provision of transport, youth services and educational products which compromises collaboration and the coordination of education and youth services across housing, employment, social security, juvenile justice, health, transport and recreation. Second, to revisit the privacy legislation and investigate the impacts of not sharing information as well as the most cost-effective use of government services around the complex needs of young people. Third, to recruit young teacher graduates to youth literacy and numeracy programs and reform the pre-service and in-service primary and secondary teacher education courses so that practitioners who work with young people in educational programs can continue the reinforcement of basic skills. Fourth, to offer young people fun and engaging ways to work with administrators to communicate their concerns for their future in their regions and in this way encourage the broadest possible engagement in the democratic processes. Lastly, to use shorter planning cycles at the central agency level in negotiations with Treasury and to allow three year performance agreements at the local level so that the unknown but large number of young people likely to seek adult learning settings serve the local needs for further education and vocational skills. This will go part of the way in addressing the drift of young people from public institutions, their communities and their home regions.

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Appendix 1: Survey Instruments

These surveys were placed on the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Australian Research Consortium website.

Literacy for Youth: What counts as success in programs for youth at risk?

A Practitioner's View

School of Education

Victoria University

Please complete this survey by Friday, 8 March 2002

Complete this survey and click on the submit button at the bottom of this page. The survey collects this data anonymously and the sender of information is not identified by email or computer address. For more information contact Carolyn Ovens at Victoria University on (03) 9688 5085.

1. Please mark your role/s and relationship with the field through employment arrangements

A. Practitioner - Teacher Practitioner – Tutor Practitioner – Training Researcher

B. Permanent Contract Casual Self-employed Other

C. Govt funding agent TAFE Enterprise / Industry RTO Private RTO Community

ACE non RTO Other

D. Paid Volunteer Other

E. Victoria NSW Queensland South Australia Western Australia Tasmania

Northern Territory ACT

2. Please rank the aspects you take into consideration when planning your programs for youth 'at risk' and how they contribute to their success. (Rank 1 = First and most Important, Rank 5 = Last and least Important).

a. Your Program: Programs for youth 'at risk' must be flexible and challenging in timing and duration

b. Planning your program: Planning for youth literacy programs takes many factors into consideration so that individual requirements are accounted for and the teacher can be flexible about how outcomes are achieved

c. Strategies and activities: Youth 'at risk' literacy programs require adaptation of the strategies outlined for literacy texts

d. Resources: Youth 'at risk' literacy programs require resources unique to their environment and their goals

e. Learner Groupings: Careful planning of learner groupings is required

f. Assessment: Young people require feedback on progress and evidence that their participation is worthwhile

g. Outcomes: best practice pedagogies in youth 'at risk' literacy meet the individual young person's goals and those of the organisation within the youth service environment

h. Beliefs about literacy and numeracy: Best practice pedagogies for youth 'at risk' learners are matched and focus on the strengths which the learner brings

i. Keeping up to date: Best practice pedagogies for youth 'at risk' rely on the latest research about the complex and rapidly changing policy environment

j. Issues and challenges: Best practice programs for youth 'at risk' rely on teachers being positive about change modelling strategies to meet challenges

Developed from source: Adult literacy and numeracy practices 2001: a snapshot. New South Wales, Department of Education and Training, 2001:12

3. **Please rank from 1 to 13 this list of factors you take into consideration when you plan particular youth 'at risk' programs. Rank by placing a number between 1-13 in each box below. Do not use a number more than once. (Rank 1+ First and most important, Rank 13 = Last and least important).**

A. Learner's goals and needs
B. Learner's literacy and numeracy practices
C. Range and genres or text types
D. Negotiated topics
E. Text books or similar resources
F. Initial assessment information
G. Curriculum document or training package
H. Assessment tasks
I. Topics based on previous teaching experience
J. Range of maths topics or skills
K. Workplace tasks / activities
L. Company supervisors / youth worker / Centrelink officer involved in presentations
M. National Reporting System

Developed from source: Adult literacy and numeracy practices 2001: a snapshot. New South Wales, Department of Education and Training, 2001:12

4. **Rank your use of the activities in a "typical" youth 'at risk' literacy / numeracy session**

Activity General Programs Ranked	**Activity Your Youth "at Risk" Programs**		
	Always	Sometimes	Rarely
A. Reading			
B. Writing			
C. Speaking			
D. Learning to learn			
E. Listening			
F. Critical Thinking			
G. Numeracy			

Developed from source: Adult literacy and numeracy practices 2001: a snapshot. New South Wales, Department of Education and Training, 2001:12

5. **List the kinds of evaluations you use to gauge success in your programs.**
6. **Please list the youth literacy and general literacy thinkers who influence your teaching and learning strategies and influence your perspective on 'good practice' in youth literacy provision.**
7. **Do your literacy programs use advisory structures?**
8. **If you answered yes to 7, which organisations do your programs draw on for advice?**
9. **Please list the networks in Australia and overseas which inform your youth literacy programs.**
10. **Please list networks of practitioners who would be interested in this research.**
11. **List any other aspects of youth 'at risk' literacy 'good practice' which you would like to record.**

THANK YOU FOR AGREEING TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

YOUR ANONYMITY IS ASSURED

We appreciate the time you have taken!

Literacy for Youth: What counts as success in programs for youth at risk?

A Manager's View

School of Education

Victoria University

Please complete this survey by Friday, 8 March 2002

Complete this survey and click on the submit button at the bottom of this page. The survey collects this data anonymously and the sender of information is not identified by email or computer address. For more information contact Carolyn Ovens at Victoria University on (03) 9688 5085.

1. Please mark your role/s and relationship with the field through employment arrangements

A. Manager Coordinator Head Teacher

B. Permanent Contract Casual Self-employed Other

C. Govt funding agent TAFE Enterprise / Industry RTO Private RTO Community

ACE non RTO Other

D. Paid Volunteer Other

E. Victoria NSW Queensland South Australia Western Australia Tasmania

Northern Territory ACT

2. Please rank the aspects you take into consideration when planning your programs for youth 'at risk' and how they contribute to their success. (Rank 1 = First and most Important, Rank 5 = Last and least Important).

a. Staff: Staff in youth 'at risk' programs permanently employed or on long term contracts.

b. Age: When recruiting staff ensure that they can provide a safe and friendly atmosphere for young people 'at risk'. Balance the age mix in the staff profile and include young people.

c. Multiple employers: Making sure that your staff do not work for many other employers minimising employee stress.

d. Teaching Qualifications: Ensure that teaching qualifications have components on youth literacy

e. Teaching Experience: Ensure that teaching experience forms basis of success with youth 'at risk' clients.

f. Professional: Ensure that programs available for teachers have very current knowledge of the youth literacy field.

g. Keeping up to date: Ensure that staff are up-to-date with organisational requirements and changes in the youth literacy field.

h. Consultation, liaison and collaboration: Networks within youth literacy and numeracy field as well as across government and community youth and employment agencies.

i. Your program for young people: Offer diversity and depth in youth 'at risk' programs.

j. Outcomes: Ensure that your youth 'at risk' clients complete their courses and document this.

k. Program completion/retention rates: record non-completion and provide and exit interview to offer alternative options for youth 'at risk' learners.

l. Beliefs about literacy: Aim to manage a balance of practitioners with learning styles and individual needss of your youth 'at risk' learners.

m. Issues and challenges: identify challenges and use a range of strategies to address them to increase the effectiveness of the program.

Developed from source: Adult literacy and numeracy practices 2001: a snapshot. New South Wales, Department of Education and Training, 2001:12

3. **List the kinds of evaluations you use to gauge success in your programs.**
4. **Please list the 'youth at risk' literacy and general literacy thinkers/writers who influence your management strategies and influence your perspective on 'good practice' in youth literacy provision.**
5. **Do your literacy programs use advisory structures?**
6. **If you answered yes to 5, which organisations do your programs draw on for advice?**
7. **Please list the networks in Australia and overseas which inform your youth literacy programs.**
8. **Please list networks of managers who would be interested in this research.**
9. **List any other aspects of management of youth literacy 'good practice' which you would like to record and has not been listed in Question 2 above. (optional)**

THANK YOU FOR AGREEING TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

YOUR ANONYMITY IS ASSURED

We appreciate the time you have taken!

Literacy for Youth: What counts as success in programs for youth at risk?

A Policy-maker's and / or Researcher's View

School of Education

Victoria University

Please complete this survey by Friday, 8 March 2002

Complete this survey and click on the submit button at the bottom of this page. The survey collects this data anonymously and the sender of information is not identified by email or computer address. For more information contact Carolyn Ovens at Victoria University on (03) 9688 5085.

1. **Please mark your role/s and relationship with the field through employment arrangements**

A. Policy Maker Researcher Policy/Research

B. Permanent Contract Casual Self-employed Other

C. Govt funding agent TAFE Enterprise / Industry RTO Private RTO Community

ACE non RTO Other

D. Paid Volunteer Other

E. Victoria NSW Queensland South Australia Western Australia Tasmania

Northern Territory ACT

2. **With regard to general aspects of youth 'at risk' policy what counts as success from the research conducted or policy you have developed. Please rank each item between 1 – 5. (Rank 1 = First and most Important, Rank 5 = Last and least Important).**

a. Your Program: Programs for youth 'at risk' must be flexible and challenging in timing and duration

b. Planning your program: Planning for youth literacy programs takes many factors into consideration so that individual requirements are accounted for and the teacher can be flexible about how outcomes are achieved

c. Strategies and activities: Youth 'at risk' literacy programs require adaptation of the strategies outlined for literacy texts

d. Resources: Youth 'at risk' literacy programs require resources unique to their environment and their goals

e. Learner Groupings: Careful planning of learner groupings is required

f. Assessment: Young people require feedback on progress and evidence that their participation is worthwhile

g. Outcomes: best practice pedagogies in youth 'at risk' literacy meet the individual young person's goals and those of the organisation within the youth service environment

h. Beliefs about literacy and numeracy: Best practice pedagogies for youth 'at risk' learners are matched and focus on the strengths which the learner brings

i. Keeping up to date: Best practice pedagogies for youth 'at risk' rely on the latest research about the complex and rapidly changing policy environment

j. Issues and challenges: Best practice programs for youth 'at risk' rely on teachers being positive about change modelling strategies to meet challenges

Developed from source: Adult literacy and numeracy practices 2001: a snapshot. New South Wales, Department of Education and Training, 2001:12

3. **Please list the researchers and the policy makers who have informed your perspective on 'good practice' in youth 'at risk' literacy provision.**

4. **Please list the networks in Australia and overseas which inform your youth literacy programs.**

5. **Please list networks of researchers who would be interested in this research.**

6. **List any other aspects of youth 'at risk' literacy 'good practice' which you would like to record. (Optional)**

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Appendix 2: Indicators of Good Practice

Appendix 2 A

OECD Review of Transition from Initial Education to Working Life Report 1998

Youth-friendly labour markets. These are characterised by:

(i) Ample training places within enterprises;

(ii) Widespread opportunities for students to be employed part-time or during vacations; and

(iii) Limited barriers to new labour entrants

Well-organised pathways. These connect initial education's qualifications with jobs and further education so that young people's skills are well understood and values by potential employees and society.

Workplace experience combined with education. This serves to establish good links between students and local employers and improves skill development by making learning more applied. Apprenticeship is the best known for of such a pathway. Others include school-organised workplace experience, as in cooperative education and part-time jobs held by students.

Tightly-knit safety nets. These pay attention to the needs of at-risk students, and quickly pick up and re-insert dropouts. They require education, employment and welfare policies be co-ordinated in ways that increase incentives for active participation in education, training and employment. They require close individual follow-up and support through local delivery mechanisms to co-ordinate services across several policy domains and levels of government.

Good career information and guidance. This aims to achieve universal access to high quality information and guidelines at an affordable cost.

Effective institutions and policy processes. These involve key stakeholders in policy design and in on-going management of transitional frameworks. Partnerships at national and local levels are important. Effective policy processes include pilot projects, learning from local initiatives and monitoring and evaluation as integral parts of policy implementation.

Appendix 2 B

OECD Employment Outlook 1999

The key challenges in the domain of **education and training** identified out of the first conference on young people were:

- to reduce upper secondary non-completion;
- to improve employability, even among those who complete upper secondary schooling;
- that early and sustained interventions, involving everyone dealing with at-risk young people is needed;
- that one response is to reform schooling itself, creating new relationships between vocational and general studies;
- to strengthen linkages between leaving and working;
- that the specific conditions of countries, which have apprenticeships are hard to replicate with some countries using national skill standards and equivalent qualifications to lead change;
- that other countries strengthen workbased learning for students;
- that in all cases strong employer involvement is crucial.

The OECD reports that in countries with wider options for young people, more are staying in education, but the quality and outcomes of their learning must be carefully monitored.

The key challenges in the domain of **active labour market policies** targeted to disadvantaged youth are that they have, up to the conference, had limited success. The OECD suggests that programs are more likely to work:

- if there is collaboration with local employers to improve the quality of jobs;
- programs ensure an appropriate mix and intensity of education and on-the-job learning;
- they ensure that instruction is of high quality;
- they provide ladders to further learning;
- they address related needs of participants such as counselling and child care;
- they use evaluation more constructively than has often been the case.

Appendix 2 C

Best Practice in Literacy and Numeracy Programs

News South Wales Department of Education & Training, Access Division, 2001

Best practice can be described as a process of continuous improvement. It also involves moral, ethical, ideological, cultural and political considerations. Best practice programs promote an active literacy and numeracy that enhances learners' capacity to think, create and question in order to participate effectively in society and work.

Best practice teachers are enthusiastic, qualified practitioners, who articulate the theories which underpin their practice and have high expectations of their learners. They participate in regular professional development and keep up to date with current resources and changes in the field. They continually reflect on and evaluate their teaching / training.

Best practice programs:

- Focus on the learner
- Encourage learners to be active participants in the learning process through negotiation of content and processes
- Encourage independent, collaborative learners
- Are relevant to learners' interest and experiences

- Cater for diverse learning needs and learning styles, as well as diverse cultural backgrounds
- Demonstrate a clear relationship between theory, research and practice
- Integrate and contextualise literacy and numeracy into learners' daily social, cultural and work practices
- Are flexible in their approach
- Integrate assessment into course design and offer a wide range of assessment tasks which have explicit criteria and are linked to course content or work practices
- Encourage learners to monitor their own progress
- Report on results of assessment in a clear accessible way
- Occur in pleasant and comfortable surroundings and create a positive social climate
- Offer individual attention and support through educational and personal counselling, advisory and support services or have clear referral mechanisms
- Offer learner support such as libraries, individual learning centres, study centres, mentoring or tutoring
- Best practice programs create a feeling of excitement, empowerment and ownership.

The program managers' survey

Survey question	Rationale
1 Staff How many teachers are employed in your center and under what conditions?	This question was designed to document the employment conditions of adult literacy and numeracy teachers, given recent restructuring and downsizing by public providers and the increasing casualisation of the workforce.
2 Age What is the average age of your staff and how many are in this age group?	This question was designed to determine whether there is an age discrepancy between teachers and students, given the current increase in programs for 'youth'. The significance of any such discrepancy however, requires further investigation.
3 Multiple employers How many of your teachers also work at other centers?	A feature of an increasingly casualised workforce is the necessity for casual teachers to work for more than one employer. This question was designed to find out the extent to which teachers work for more than one employer, with the assumption that this may make their work more complex, difficult and/or stressful.
4 Teaching qualifications What is the most recent teaching qualification of your staff, and when did they gain it?	One of the criteria for best practice is qualified staff with current qualifications. This question was designed to establish the type, level and currency of qualifications.
5 Teaching experience What are the main areas of teaching experience or background that your staff had before teaching in the adult literacy and numeracy field?	It is assumed that the previous experience and background of teachers impacts on their practice. This question was designed to find out how many teachers come from a primary, secondary or adult teaching background.
6 Professional development What are some recent examples of literacy and numeracy professional development activity undertaken by member of your staff? This may include informal training?	Ongoing professional development is another criteria for best practice. International Literacy Year 1990 and the Special Intervention Program (SIP) saw an increase in professional development programs around Australia. However, since then there is a perception that professional development opportunities have decreased. This question was designed to establish what types of professional development activities are being undertaken, and by whom.
7 Keeping up to date How do you ensure that you and your staff keep u -to-	Again, a criterion for best practice is keeping up-to-date with current issues.

date with current issues, resources, changes?	
8 Consultation, liaison & collaboration Who do you consult , liaise, collaborate or form strategic alliances with, on a regular basis?	In recent years, a number of reports stress the importance of forming strategic alliances and liaising at the local levels. Such consultations and collaborations have been a feature of best practice. This question seeks to establish the extent of such liaisons with the adult literacy field.
9 Your program Name of program, length, focus, delivery mode, location	This question was designed to document the range and diversity of adult literacy and numeracy provision across Australia
10 Outcomes Module / course completion; organizational goals; atmosphere of excitement and continuous improvement	Documenting outcomes has become increasingly important for all stakeholders and is key feature of best practice. The descriptors come from literature about best practice. See the literature review section.
11 Program completion / retention rates Reasons for 'dropping out'	Little research has been done on why students stop coming to classes. This question builds on work done by Black & Sim in 1990 and uses descriptors from their findings.
12 Beliefs about literacy & numeracy What do you believe about literacy and numeracy (LN) teaching and learning?	An important feature of best practice is that practitioners can articulate their beliefs about adult literacy and numeracy and that their practice is supported by theory. The descriptors come largely from an article by Jean Searle (1999) titles 'What is Literacy?'. The list of authors / researchers is drawn from adult literacy and numeracy teachers training courses at University of South Australia, Deakin University and University of Technology Sydney.
13 Issues and challenges How significantly do the following issues and challenges in the adult literacy and numeracy field bear on the capacity of your learners to increase their levels of literacy?	This question was designed to determine the significance of various issues and challenges facing practitioners and the impact of these issues on their work. The issues appear in much of the current vocational education and training literature and are often the subjects of discussion at conferences.

The teachers' survey

Survey question	**Rationale**
1 Your program	As for Managers' Survey
2 Planning your program What factors do you consider when planning your program?	Planning is a crucial element of best practice. This question seeks to determine what factors are most useful to teachers when planning their programmes.
3 Strategies / activities What is the breakdown of activities you use most commonly in your teaching of literacy and numeracy?	This question was designed to give a 'snapshot' of the types of strategies and activities that are most commonly used in adult literacy and numeracy teaching contexts, be it classroom or the workplace or wherever. The strategies are typical of those found in most teacher training courses or texts.
4 Resources What resources do you use most commonly that you find most effective in helping your students improve their literacy and numeracy?	This question was designed to ascertain the resources that are most widely used and the extent to which 'new', more technology-based resources such as the Internet are being used.
5 Learner groupings What do you consider to be an ideal grouping of learners?	Small groups, or one-to-one, have traditionally been considered optimal in adult literacy and numeracy provision, particularly for beginners. However, there has been increasing pressure on providers to increase

	has been increasing pressure on providers to increase their student/teacher rations to save costs. The actual mix of students also needs examination, particularly given the increase in the numbers of 'youth' who are now attending classes. In workplace contexts, issues around power relations may also impact on ideal learner groupings. This question was designed to establish what teachers consider optimal.
6 Assessment Initial, formative and summative assessment	Assessment is a key feature of best practice and is particularly important in competency-based training. There has been increasing emphasis in recent years on clearly articulated, national assessment procedures and reporting. This question has been designed to find out how and when teachers assess and the role of the National Reporting System in this process.
7 Outcomes meeting individual needs, module / course completion, organisation's goals, atmosphere of excitement and continuous improvement	Same as Q. 10 in Managers' survey with the addition of 'meeting individual needs and goals', which has traditionally been an important part of the adult literacy and numeracy field.
8 Beliefs about literacy & numeracy	Same as Q 12 in Managers' survey
9 Keeping up to date	Same as Q 7 in Managers' survey
10 Issues and challenges	Same as Q 13 in Managers' survey

(Source: NSW, 2001: 11-14)

Appendix 2 D

Good Practice in Youth Development: A framework of principles – A discussion document. Commonwealth Minister for Youth Affairs. Ausyouth, 2001

The principles support a commitment to:

1. Strengths based, positive youth development as the foundation for policy and program development
2. Participation of young people in all levels of planning and decision making
3. An inclusive ethos
4. An experiential model of learning that builds on capabilities and skills while maximising opportunities for fun and recognising age and developmental phases
5. Respecting community voice and identity
6. Encouraging communities to value and engage young people
7. Partnerships
8. Quality Outcomes
9. Encouraging and respecting choice
10. Recognising the contribution of all stakeholders
11. Promotion that is ethical, honest and non-patronising
12. Providing opportunities for service to the community that are meaningful for both young people and the community
13. Maximising formal and community recognition of learning outcomes
14. Strengthen the interconnectedness of social networks.

Youth Development Good Practice Indicator **POLICY**	
1. Strengths based, positive youth development as foundation for policy and program development	1.1 The concept of positive youth development underpins policy development
	1.2 Aspects of the framework of positive youth development are further researched and the findings disseminated
	1.3 The positive youth development approach is contextualised for local communities, organisations and young people who participate
2. Participation of young people in all levels of planning and decision making	2.1 Young people are acknowledged as key stakeholders in the policy development processes
	2.2 Young people's participation is recognised as an integral part of policy development
	2.3 Young people are provided with multiple opportunities to participate in policy development processes at all levels, through a variety of mechanisms
	2.4 Structures are set in place (such as advisory councils, boards and committees) to provide young people with the means to participate in policy development processes on an ongoing basis and to be treated equally with other stakeholders

Youth Development Good Practice Indicator POLICY		
3. An inclusive ethos	3.1	An inclusive ethos is reflected in the development of access and equity policies
	3.2	Community profiles are 'mapped' to inform planning, including the identification of access and equity considerations
	3.3	Barriers to participation are identified and strategies to overcome these are implemented
4. An experiential model of learning that builds on capabilities and skills while maximising opportunities for fun and recognising age and developmental phases	4.1	The value of life long learning is embedded in positive youth development processes
	4.2	The knowledge base relating to the experiential model of learning is used as the starting point for policy development
	4.3	Recognition that the diversity of developmental stages amongst any age cohort of young people will require multiple opportunities for participation
5. Recognising community voice and identity	5.1	Key communities are engaged in policy development processes
	5.2	Policy reflects community voice and identity and community values and beliefs are respected
	5.3	Existing community knowledge and expertise are sought out as an integral part of policy development processes
6. Encouraging communities to value and engage young people	6.1	The benefits to communities of the contribution and engagement of young people are articulated
	6.2	A variety of examples of the contribution of young people to their communities are showcased
	6.3	Policies that increase opportunities for young people to engage with and contribute to their communities are developed and implemented
7. Partnerships	7.1	The value of partnership arrangements is modelled in policy processes
	7.2	Support for the implementation of policy through partnerships is made explicit in policy documentation
	7.3	Policy initiatives encourage and reward collaboration
8. Quality Outcomes	8.1	Policy objectives and intended outcomes are clearly stated, systematically monitored and evaluated
	8.2	Consultative processes are used to identify benchmarks and standards
	8.3	The plan and methods for monitoring and reviewing outcomes are established prior to policy implementation
9. Encouraging and respecting choice	9.1	The diversity of young people's wants and needs is recognised in policy that is expansive rather than restrictive

Youth Development Good Practice Indicator POLICY	
	9.2 The value of alternative options are explored and articulated
10. Recognising the contribution of all stakeholders	10.1 There is recognition that stakeholders (groups and individuals) contribute in a variety of ways
	10.2 The contribution of all stakeholders is acknowledged
	10.3 The changing patterns and trends in the way volunteer effort is contributed are considered and accommodated
11. Promotion that is ethical, honest and non-patronising	11.1 the diversity of the community is recognised and reflected in promotional strategies
	11.2 Young people are involved in the development and design of promotional material
	11.3 Sponsorship guidelines are developed that ensure the use of respectful and non-patronising promotional strategies by sponsors and that exclude sponsors who are involved in promoting activities and products that are harmful to young people
12. Providing opportunities for service to the community that are meaningful for both young people and the community	12.1 The value of service to the community is identified and promoted
	12.2 The concept of service learning is explored and utilized
	12.3 Policies which encourage and support service to the community is developed.
13. Maximising formal and community recognition of learning outcomes	13.1 The notion of non-formal education is further explored and researched
	13.2 A range of recognition options is developed to accommodate the diversity of organisations and programs
	13.3 Strategies to support the implementation of a range of recognition options are considered, developed, publicised and encouraged
	13.4 Portability of accredited outcomes across programs, organisations and jurisdictions is facilitated and promoted
14. Strengths and interconnectedness of social networks	14.1 The interconnection of social networks is a fundamental premise of positive youth development
	14.2 Interconnectedness is characterised by a commitment to the identification, mapping and exploration of existing pathways and beyond
	14.3 Acknowledgement and recognition that robust interconnections between social networks require nurturing and resourcing
	14.4 Recognition that an impact on any part of a social network will impact on the whole network and may have unintended or hidden consequences

Youth Development Good Practice Indicator ORGANISATION	
1. Strengths based, positive youth development as foundation for policy and program development	1.1 Organisation's vision/mission statement includes specific reference to commitment to positive youth development
	1.2 Staff and volunteers are able to articulate the relationship between the concept of positive youth development and the values and beliefs of the organisation
	1.3 The demonstration of positive youth development is included in organisational evaluations
2. Participation of young people in all levels of planning and decision making	2.1 An objective of the organisation is to ensure young people are involved in its planning and decision making processes
	2.2 Young people's 'voice' is respected and taken into account in all organisational planning and decision making
	2.3 Organisational advisory and decision making structures explicitly include young people
3. An inclusive ethos	3.1 Well developed access and equity policies are in place and these are understood by all paid and volunteer staff and participants
	3.2 There are clear public statements about these policies
	3.3 All paid and volunteer staff receive appropriate training about equity issues eg. Cross cultural communication, challenging stereotyping
	3.4 Specific strategies that are monitored and evaluated are in place to address barriers that may unintentionally exclude groups
	3.5 Special efforts are made to recruit volunteers and paid staff from the diversity of Australian communities
	3.6 The organisation is able to demonstrate inclusivity by maintaining demographic data sets about its members and participants
4. Model of learning that builds on capabilities and skills while maximising opportunities for fun and recognising age and developmental phases	4.1 The ability to related to and work with young people is essential requirements for program leaders
	4.2 Staff are trained in an awareness of the developmental tasks of adolescence and early adulthood, youth culture and issues, such as literacy and numeracy
	4.3 Mentoring and support is offered to new leaders
	4.4 Well developed risk management policies and procedures are in place that are well understood by leaders
5. Recognising community voice and identity	5.1 The structures for thew involvement of local and broader communities in organisational advisory and decision making processes are made explicit

Youth Development Good Practice Indicator ORGANISATION	
	5.2 Advice and support from the community are actively sought out, and in particular about access and equity issues
	5.3 Community voice and identity are incorporated in organisational activity
	5.4 Communities are asked how the organisation can enhance the community
	5.5 Links to existing community networks and structures made
6. Encouraging communities to value and engage young people	6.1 Development of relationships with caring, competent adults beyond the family is a feature of the organisation's programs and activities
	6.2 The organisation provides opportunities for young people to engage with and contribute to their community through the organisation" programs and activities
	6.3 The meaning and significance of organisational specific awards are promoted to the corporate sector and the community
	6.4 Opportunities for community involvement in and support for the organisation's programs and activities are identified and promoted
7. Partnerships	7.1 Opportunities for collaborative initiatives with other organisations and communities are actively pursued on an ongoing basis
	7.2 The unique objectives, values and expertise of each organisation are acknowledged and respected in the partnership
	7.3 Partnership arrangements between organisations are formalised by memorandums of understanding or service agreements
	7.4 Partnership structural and organisational arrangements are regularly reviewed and evaluated to improve and strengthen the partnership
	7.5 There is an explicitly stated process for resolving issues and disagreements between partner organisations
	7.6 Partnerships that are informal and work well are also recognised
8. Quality Outcomes	8.1 The organisational goals and objectives include a commitment to continuous improvement
	8.2 There are well developed processes for maintaining quality across the organisation and in the delivery of programs across multiple locations
	8.3 The outcomes of organisational programs and activities are clearly defined
	8.4 There are processes in place to regularly seek direct feedback (using a variety of methods) from young

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Youth Development Good Practice Indicator ORGANISATION		
		feedback (using a variety of methods) from young people (and their families / carers where relevant) about all aspects of programs and activities
	8.5	All organisational members participate in organisational self assessment and / or continuous improvement processes
	8.6	Using humorous organisational self-reflection is encouraged as one means of identifying improvements
	8.7	A code of conduct is developed for both staff and volunteers, including a clear and public statement about acceptable behaviours
9. Encouraging and respecting choice	9.1	The values and beliefs that underpin the organisation's programs and activities are defined
	9.2	The organisation is open to new ideas
	9.3	There is flexibility within the organisational framework to accommodate diversity
10. Recognising the contribution of all stakeholders	10.1	Organisational processes model teamwork and respect for the contribution of paid and voluntary staff and participants
	10.2	Innovative ways for people to becomes involved as volunteers are identified
	10.3	There are documented job descriptions for all paid and volunteer positions
	10.4	Rigorous selection, recruitment and training processes that reflect that importance of all contributors, whether paid or volunteer, are used
11. Promotion that is ethical, honest and non-patronising	11.1	There is an explicit rationale for programs and activities involving young people provided by the organisation
	11.2	The programs and activities to be delivered by organisations are accurately promoted
	11.3	Sponsorship guidelines are developed for organisation that exclude sponsors who are involved in promoting activities and products that are potentially harmful to young people
12. Providing opportunities for service to the community that are meaningful for both young people and the community	12.1	Commitment to service to the community is recognised in the organisations' objectives
	12.2	Community links are established which increase opportunities for non-exploitative service
	12.3	Innovative ways to provide service to the community are explored and utilised
	12.4	Develop service partnerships where the service activity is defined and desired outcomes agreed
13. Maximising formal and community recognition of learning outcomes	13.1	Opportunities for accreditation and recognition of the organisation's programs and activities are actively explore

Youth Development Good Practice Indicator ORGANISATION	
	explored
	13.2 Accredited induction and ongoing training are offered to paid and voluntary staff
	13.3 The professional development of paid and voluntary staff is a high priority and formally accredited where possible
	13.4 The key competencies needed by adult leaders are identified and provide the basis for leader training
	13.5 Arrangements are made to seek formal recognition for existing knowledge and skills of staff and volunteers
14. Strengths and interconnectedness of social networks	14.1 The place of the organisation within the broader community environment is established
	14.2 Potential connections with other organisations with a commonality of interest are identified and explored
	14.3 Networks with other organisations and local communities are fostered and utilised to enhance the diversity of youth development opportunities

Youth Development Good Practice Indicator PROGRAM	
1. Strengths based, positive youth development as foundation for policy and program development	1.1 The goals of the program reflect the outcomes associated with positive youth development approach
	1.2 Program leaders and participants have a good understanding of the concept of positive youth development
	1.3 Positive youth development is used as the starting point for program evaluations
2. Participation of young people in all levels of planning and decision making	2.1 Young people are actively involved in the program design and implementation, including the establishment of guidelines and 'rules'
	2.2 Young people's 'voice' is listened to and acted upon where possible
	2.3 Young people are provided with opportunities to participate in other planning and decision making processes associated with program implementation, such as special events and joint activities across organisations
3. An inclusive ethos	3.1 There is sufficient flexibility in the program design and implementation to accommodate the varying requirements of young people
	3.2 Program design occurs in consultation with representatives from diverse groups
	3.3 Cultural awareness and pride are fostered
	3.4 Culturally appropriate and non-discriminatory language is use

Youth Development Good Practice Indicator PROGRAM	
	language is used
	3.5 This program provides a safe environment where racism and / or harassment is not tolerated and there are clear processes for dealing with such issues, including public statements of these processes
	3.6 There is consistent application of enforcement of rules and expulsions is only used as a mechanism of last resort for handling problems
4. An experiential model of learning that builds on capabilities and skills while maximising opportunities for fun and recognising age and developmental phases	4.1 The organisation of activities is structured sequentially to build and maintain learning outcomes and to recognise increasing responsibility for self
	4.2 Young people take ownership of their participation and are able to identify the benefits
	4.3 Activities are interesting and meaningful, reflecting young people's needs and wishes, and not rigid replications of adult instructional regimes
	4.4 Realistic high expectations are set and young people are challenged to extend themselves in a safe environment
	4.5 Young people have the opportunity to try activities that may not have access to other wise
	4.6 Integrated approaches to develop self esteem, confidence, leadership and team membership as skills (rather than only personal attributes) are provided through activity, instruction, service and reflection
5. Recognising community voice and identity	5.1 Local programs are developed in consultation with relevant local communities
	5.2 The values and beliefs of specific communities are actively accommodated in program design and implementation
	5.3 Community identity is reflected in program design where possible
	5.4 Program leaders contribute to and help sustain robust local community networks
6. Encouraging communities to value and engage young people	6.1 Young people's participation in the program is visible to the local community
	6.2 Community members are encouraged to take leadership roles in program implementation
	6.3 There is mutual respect and reciprocity between adult leaders and younger participants
	Young people are encouraged and supported in taking on leadership roles
	6.5 The adult leader's role is primarily facilitative as well as involving transferring of skills
7. Partnerships	7.1 Partnership arrangements are used to enhance program delivery and the diversity of activitie

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Youth Development Good Practice Indicator PROGRAM		
		delivery and the diversity of activities
	7.2	The roles and responsibilities of various partners in the program implementation are clearly defined
	7.3	There is sharing of knowledge and skills between partners and the contribution of all partners are fully informed
	7.4	Communication strategies are devised and implemented to ensure that all program partners are fully informed
	7.5	Together, all program partners regularly review and evaluate programs and determine future directions
8. Quality Outcomes	8.1	Programs can be replicated and are sustainable through clear documentation
	8.2	Evaluation is embedded in program design and implementation
	8.3	Program record keeping processes are formalised and provide reliable information that can be used in program evaluation
	8.4	Program reviews use information gathered in a variety of ways and from a range of participants and stakeholders
	8.5	Improvement through reflecting on practice is an integral part of the program delivery
9. Encouraging and respecting choice	9.1	Participation in programs is voluntary and non-coercive
	9.2	The design of the program is such that there are multiple opportunities for young people to learn to make choices as individuals and as part of a group / team
	9.3	Withdrawal from participation in programs does not incur a penalty
10. Recognising the contribution of all stakeholders	10.1	The contribution of leaders and participants in program implementation is recognised
	10.2	Leaders and participants are provided with opportunities to maximise their individual capacity to contribute
	10.3	Reimbursement for significant recurring out-of-pocket expenses incurred by volunteer adult leaders is available
11. Promotion that is ethical, honest and non-patronising	11.1	A strategy including rationale, for the promotion of programs is articulated and documented
	11.2	program design and implementation arrangements have a clearly articulated rationale
	11.3	The sustainability and long term direction of the program is considered from the outset
12. Providing opportunities for service to the	12.1	A variety of ways of providing se vice to the

Youth Development Good Practice Indicator PROGRAM	
community that are meaningful for both young people and the community	community are offered
	12.2 Service is sustained over a significant time and is subject to explicit reflection
	12.3 The outcomes of service for the community and for young people are made explicit and celebrated in formal and informal ways
13. Maximising formal and community recognition of learning outcomes	13.1 The achievements of young people are recognised and celebrated using formal and informal mechanisms
	13.2 Achievement is rewarded for all participants
	13.3 Programs work together to provide multiple recognition opportunities for young people
	13.4 Programs develop mechanisms for recognising young people's existing skills and achievements
	13.5 Prior achievements and skills of young people are acknowledged and cross-credited where appropriate
14. Strengths and interconnectedness of social networks	14.1 Opportunities for increasing social networks are included in program activities
	14.2 Young people are able to form supportive relationships in safety and confidence with adults and peers beyond their immediate family and social circle
	14.3 The program is open to contact and involvement from families and significant others
	14.4 The important of social connections and obligations is recognised in program planning
	14.5 Appropriate referral of young people to other organisations and programs is made

Appendix 2 E:

Rethinking Literacy Education: The Critical Need for Practice-based Change B. Quigley, (1997: 110)

Four Working Philosophies Underlying Literacy Practice

Political Perspective		Popular Perspective	
Vocational	**Liberal**	**Humanist**	**Liberatory**
Literacy is mainly for preparation and financial independence	Literacy is mainly for acquiring cultural knowledge	Literacy is mainly for personal growth, self-actualisation, and self-esteem building	Literacy is mainly for critical thinking and political awareness
A. Early Advocates			
Skinner	Livingstone	Rogers	Friere
Watson	Adler	Maslow	Alinsky
B. Current Advocates			
Stitcht	Hersh	Fingeret	Heaney
C. Methodological Underpinnings			
Behaviourism	Pedagogy	Andragogy	Case studies
Competencies	Great literature	Discussion	Site visits
D. Content Applied			
Technical	Great literature	Inspiring stories	Case studies
Work-related	History	Student-authored	Conflict

Rethinking Literacy Education: The Critical Need for Practice-based Change B. Quigley, (1997: 178)

Identification of At-Risk Learners

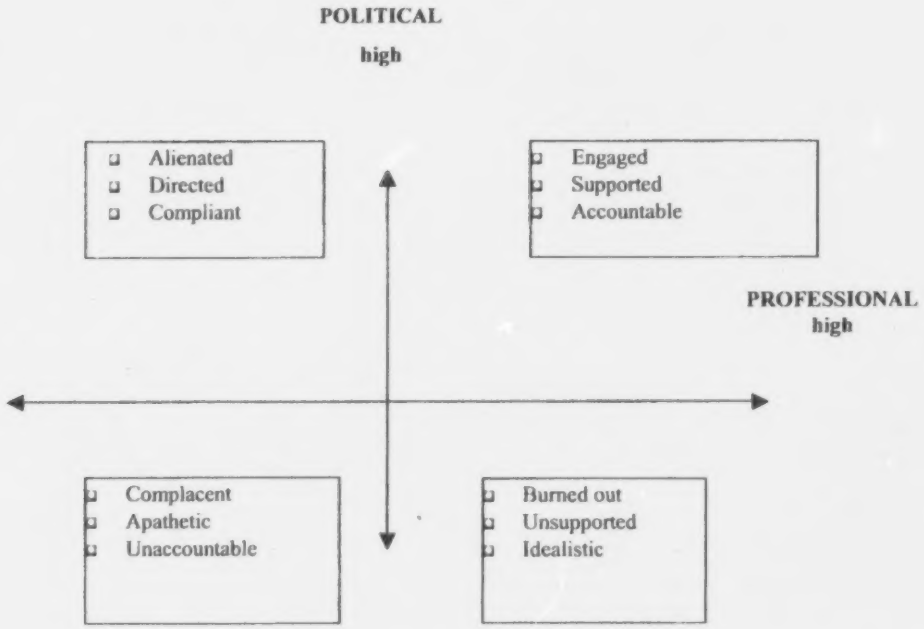
Level One: Counsellor No.1 Observes for Intake Behaviours				
Hostile	**Sceptical**	**Withdrawn**	**Hesitant**	**Uncertain**
Level Two: Counsellor No. 1 Sees Particular At-Risk Behaviours				
Little eye contact, negative body language, uncertainty about performance, doubts about making in-class friends, lack of enthusiasm				
Level Three: Counsellor No. 2 Investigates School Background				
Tested on the Prior Schooling and Self Perception Inventory Uncertain about: ▫ Succeeding in subjects failed back at school ▫ Making new friends, as in school ▫ Getting along with teachers, as in school ▫ Receiving outside support, as in school				
Level Four: Counsellor No. 3 Conducts Embedded Figures Test				
High levels of field dependence, indicating a need for acceptance by peers and teachers				

Appendix 2 F:

Teacher Standards, Quality and Professionalism

Working Document

Australian College of Education, 2001, 1 June



Appendix 2 G:

Reforming Schools through Innovative Teaching *J. Cumming & C. Owen (2001)*

The following attributes, skills, knowledge, values and strategies are considered useful benchmarks to increasing innovation in education (ibid: 59-60):

- Attributes

Innovative teachers exhibit a number of personal attributes:

Altruism, confidence, creativity, intuition, passion, perception, modesty.

- Skills

Innovative teachers demonstrate advanced skills in

Change management, human relations, applied learning, curriculum integration, outcomes-based approaches, standards setting, teaching techniques

- Knowledge

Innovative teachers have in-depth understandings on a range of topics:

Adolescence, youth culture, subject matter, pedagogy (adolescence and adults), innovation, change, information technology

- Values

Innovative teachers follow a code of ethics that reflects core values associated with:

Youth, learning, improvement, philosophy, sharing, modelling, accountability

- Strategies

Innovative teachers integrate their individual attributes by means of strategies with capacities to:

Challenge assumptions, conduct research, formulation of options, form alliances, establish networks, marshal resources, build communities, provide training, identify advocates, transfer ownership, engage stakeholders, value-add, utilise the media, celebrate success, champion innovation, engage parents, create spaces and promote evaluation.

Appendix 2 H:

Full Service Schools Program, Department of Education, Training & Youth Affairs, 2001

- A broader policy and community climate that supports innovation and change
- A student centred philosophy
- Leadership within the organisation
- Creation of a vision for action
- Commitment to ongoing learning and enterprise
- Collaboration and community linkages
- Engagement of parents
- School climate and willingness to change
- An integrated approach to curriculum development and student support
- Quality of staff and other supports (pages 77 – 79)

Appendix 2 I:

Prime Minister's Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce 2001 - Appendix 1 Identifying good practice in supporting youth transitions to independence

Prepared for: Analysis and Equity Branch, Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs Keys Young May 2000

- good practice features of transitional programmes for mainstream students,
- good practice features for Indigenous young people,
- good practice features of programmes for at risk students, homeless, unemployed and other disadvantaged young people,
- good practice features of programmes for young people with disabilities,
- examples of co-operation between different levels of government (Keys Young 2000b:147 – 152).

Of the projects they observed, the following elements were common to most:

1 Management with clearly articulated purpose and vision;
2 Appropriately skilled and committed staff;
3 High quality relationships between young people and project staff;
4 Tailored programmes/approaches to meet individual young people's needs;
5 Strong partnerships with key stakeholders;
6 Integration of action research and evaluation into programme monitoring and development;
7 A focus on success and the means to achieve it;
8 A strong sense of ownership of young people and other stakeholders;
9 Involvement of young people in programme development
10 Flexibility in programme entry and exit points and providing the opportunity to explore a range of subjects/options;
11 Flexibility in responding to stakeholder needs – the willingness and capacity to negotiate solutions to their mutual benefit;
12 Awareness of the importance of marketing/public relations to promote the strengths and successes in the public domain;
13 Sharing and celebrating success;
14 On-going commitment to programme development;
15 A 'driver' who takes major responsibility (at least in the initial stages) for project development;
16 The development of mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of the programme;
17 A clear values orientation – adhering to social justice and inclusion principles;
18 Collaborative funding arrangements (for example between Commonwealth, State and Local Governments or between schools and industry;
19 Creative and efficient use of programme funding;
20 A willingness and ability to step outside the 'frame' and think laterally and creatively about solutions;
21 An overt commitment to the future of young people beyond school;
22 Appropriate equipment, resources and facilities; and
23 A 'bottom-up' rather than a 'top-down' approach to encompass local needs and opportunities (ibid: 147-148).

Core elements of good practice in transitional programmes for **mainstream students** includes:

- Having strong collaborative leadership and management;
- Developing strong partnerships between school, business and the community;
- Using the expertise of stakeholders in the area;
- Linking programmes to the local market and local needs;
- Developing specific programmes for individual businesses involved with schools;
- Engaging in high level networking activities;

- Embedding enterprise and vocational elements in the curriculum;
- Teaching transferable skills;
- Giving high priority to the authenticity and the real-world aspect of enterprise and the world of work;
- Matching students' skills and interests with appropriate work placement;
- Allocating specific resources to co-ordinating individual student's exit from school to work or further education and training;
- Providing bridges to accreditation and qualifications by ensuring that every student engages in activities that are accredited or can contribute to a qualification;
- Utilising, where appropriate, non-teaching staff for transitional programmes and/or staff with excellent links with the community/business;
- Ensuring programmes assist young people to become 'work ready'; and
- Supporting systemic frameworks and adequate on-going resourcing (ibid: 148).

Good practice features for programmes for **Indigenous young people** includes:

- Culturally appropriate programme content;
- Employment of Indigenous people in programme delivery (particularly in the school setting);
- Involvement of the Indigenous community in the development, implementation and management of the programme;
- Use of Indigenous role models (in school generally and in school-to-work programmes;
- Participation of teaching staff in professional development that promotes cultural awareness;
- Adoption of an integrated approach to learning and inclusion of literacy and numeracy in a range of topics/lessons;
- Provision of personal support to young people and the adoption of an holistic approach to meeting their needs;
- Development of links and networks with Indigenous young people to build peer support and self-esteem;
- Recognition that student's social, health and physical needs must be addressed in addition to their educational issues;
- Provision of intensive tutoring support, where possible in advance of student lessons;
- Recognition of the need to provide alternative education whilst avoiding marginalisation within the mainstream school;
- Appropriate staff-student ratios to address their high level needs; and
- Adoption of appropriate and flexible teaching strategies to accommodate the young people's diverse learning styles and cultural differences (ibid: 149-150).

A list of elements of success for programmes for **at risk students, homeless, unemployed and other disadvantaged young people** includes:

- Providing off site or non-school settings or environments;
- Adopting a community development model that attracts significant community support and good will (for example local council, community groups
- Giving young people something tangible to leave with ensuring that what they do while participating in the program is accredited and/or leads to a qualification;
- Having the capacity to be creative and innovative in order to maximise engagement with young people;
- Ensuring that the programme involves practical hands on activities that are relevant to the real world of work;
- Employing tradespeople, youth and community workers in addition to (or, in some cases, instead of) teachers to better engage the young people and better prepare them for the world of work;
- Adopting a holistic approach and provision of personal and cultural support;
- Giving the young people responsibility and communicating a sense of trust in them – treating them as adults and not as children;
- Avoiding judgements and giving young people a fresh start, focusing on the future and not dwelling on the past;
- Operating implicit rather than explicit case-management (so that young people do not get a sense of being 'managed')

- Avoiding fixed entry and exit points or fixed timetables and programme boundaries;
- Giving young people the time they need to increase their confidence and self-esteem and to develop their skills;
- Creating a sense of 'belonging' to the programme/centre through good relationships with peers and staff and involving young people in team-building activities that create a caring environment; and
- Having positive expectations about what the young people can achieve and acknowledging and celebrating their achievements. (ibid: 150-151)

Good practice features of programmes assisting **young people with disabilities** includes:

- Individualised needs assessment, planning, funding, and assistance to young people and their families;
- Recognition that the family is in a strong position to determine their children's needs;
- The empowerment of families to explore options and assist them in making decisions about their child;
- Provision of direct funding to the young people's families to use at their discretion in assisting the young person's needs;
- Capacity of State and Commonwealth Governments to come together to work across boundaries and operationalise this at the local level;
- Provision of single point access to the education system; and
- Clear principles of inclusion and strong values focus encompassing the positive belief about young people with disabilities, their rights and opportunities (ibid; 151).

Keys Young in summing up the area of good practice identifies a **core set of ten good practice** principles:

- Tailoring programmes and approaches to meeting the needs of individual young people;
- Having the flexibility and freedom to develop programmes in line with local needs and opportunities;
- Building choice and flexibility into the programme design and avoiding 'locking' young people into programmes too early, thereby ensuring they have the opportunity to explore options in a safe and supportive environment;
- Having flexible programme 'entry' and 'exit points;
- Providing personal and cultural support in conjunction with education, training and employment programmes;
- Ensuring all learning relevant to the world of work is as 'real life' as possible and is directly linked to real world situations;
- Actively involving young people in the design, management and operation of transitional programmes;
- Building close and mutually-advantageous partnerships between key stakeholders (for example industry, community, government, non-government agencies, employers) in the design, delivery and/or management of programmes;
- Allocating sufficient resources during the programme development phase and later to ensure the sustainability of the programme; and
- Developing good performance and evaluation mechanisms and actively using information from these in programme development and planning (ibid:151– 152).

Appendix 2 J:

A report for the Full Service Schools Program: Room to Move. Why school/ACE partnerships expand opportunities for potential early school leavers ***Delia Bradshaw Allie Clemans Cathy Donovan Helen Macrae February, 2001***

Indicators of good partnerships:

- Successful partnerships have a common purpose
- They have shared vision
- They use an agreed democratic approach
- They accept the need for leadership
- They know and understand each other
- They manage resources well
- They keep going
- Choices for young people are created and expanded
- Gifted teachers are used (pages 56 – 60)

More Than Just Words: Good Practice in Literacy Provision in the Koorie Vocational Context.

Rizzetti, J. (1995) Northern Metropolitan College of TAFE, Preston
(pp 9, 19, 24, 29, 33, 46, 53, 64, 69, 74, 83)

Establishing vocational training programs: A Guide for Administrators and Planners

Consulting with the Community
Good practice involves:

- Approaching the local education consultative group in your area
- Speaking with the Administrator in the local co-op, and taking advice on the most appropriate people to consult
- Being sensitive in your approach
- Being prepared to wait acceptance
- Talking with Koorie people, not at them
- Breaking down the jargon of training into meaningful language
- Taking time to listen to, and accept, advice

Staffing and Resource Provision for Koorie Programs
Good practice involves:

- Providing an environment where Koorie students feel comfortable: where Koorie students can be together, and which has a Koorie identity
- Allowing new sessional or contract teachers sufficient time to be known and accepted by the students and the community
- Encouraging teachers to move out into the community and build up an identity as "the teachers from the TAFE"
- Ensuring that subjects involving cultural knowledge

The Koorie Organisation as a Workplace
Good practice involves:

- Being aware of the importance of Koorie organisations as a major source of employment for Koorie people
- Recognition of the differences in the "employer" role within organisations
- Critically examining the assumptions about the workplace that are implicit in the national training reform agenda
- Seeing contact with Koorie workplaces as a learning experience for BOTH the training provider and the workplace clients
- Understanding the different dynamics of Koorie organisation workplaces
- Being flexible in the delivery of programs for Koorie workers. In both on-and off the job training be responsive to the nature of Koorie workplaces.

Planning Work Experience Programs

College Liaison and Supervision
Good practice involves:

- Fostering and maintaining links with organisations and the Koorie Liaison Officers who are happy to take students on workplacement
- Ensuring that a structured program will be provided for students while on placement
- Supporting the students with pre-placement interviews and letters of application for work experience
- Maintaining close supervision and liaison, particularly in the first week of a placement
- Ensuring that the lack of clothes or transport etc is not preventing a student from attending placement. Handle these issues with care, to avoid a 'shame' situation

- Handling abandoned placements with sensitivity both toward the student and the employer

Working with Koorie students in the vocational setting: A Guide for General Classroom Teachers

Koorie English
Good Practice involves:

- Recognising the language differences involve more than words
- Respecting cultural differences concerning eye contact and response to communication
- Being explicit about the fact that both standards Australian English and Koorie English are dialects, with neither one superior linguistically to the other

Learning styles and learning experiences
Good practice involves:

- Recognising that the formal learning situation may conflict with learning experiences of many Koorie students. This may be manifested in ambivalence about training and a sense of autonomy and motivation
- Critically evaluating the values promoted through the training situation, the curriculum, the classroom delivery and assessment procedures

Dynamics of the Formal Group Learning Situation
Good practice involves:

- Accepting and valuing the variety of Koorie identity that your students bring to the classroom
- Accepting the cultural diversity is marked by adherence to different values and priorities
- Recognising that your class has dynamics of its won, based on family loyalties, authority relationships
- And reciprocity
- Treating older people in the classroom with respect which flows from their position within their community
- Allowing time for students to accept you as a person
- Avoiding marking students out from the group through either reprimand or praise
- Drawing on the experience of your Koorie Liaison Officer and other teachers who have experience in working with Koorie students
- Allowing yourself the time and scope to develop the relationship between you and your students

Literacy support for Koorie students in vocational training: A Guide for Adult Literacy Practitioners

Adult Literacy Provision in the Koorie Context
Good practice involves:

- Letting go of the assumption that literacy skills are equally valued by all people
- Embedding literacy and numeracy tasks within a practical and vocational context
- Ensuring that literacy provision is not a "shame job". Be sensitive to timing and location of literacy support

Liaison with Subject Teachers
Good practice involves:

- Being clear in your own mind about your responsibilities to the students and to your fellow professionals
- Being flexible to meet the students' immediate assessment-based needs while advancing towards longer-term skills and strategies
- Acting as a resource and sounding-board for subject teachers who may feel apprehensive about dealing with Koorie students.

Language and Content
Good Practice involves:

- Recognising that "teaching the reading and writing" in a vocational subject is more than just words: it encompasses ways of talking, actions, beliefs and values
- Drawing on the lived experience of Koorie students to make connections from the known to the unknown
- Providing students with a range of "make-do" strategies that can be transferred to other tasks and contexts
- Valuing above all the importance of the relationship between teacher and student

Appendix 3: Protocols for focus groups

1. The discussion group proceeds with those young people who have read the approved information and consented on the approved form sent beforehand or whose parent or guardian have consented on their behalf if they are younger than eighteen years of age.

2. A local facilitator is selected by the case site and given an hour's briefing and later debriefing by the researcher on their role in the conduct and expected outcomes of the discussion.

3. The researcher will scribe for the group.

4. Each participant is to be identified by a nametag.

5. The facilitator is to achieve agreement of the participants that all information and discussion would remain within the room and not be discussed outside.

6. The facilitator is to inform participants that if there are any unresolved feelings as a result of the discussion, the counselling services of Victoria University is available.

7. The facilitator is to point out that statements made by participants would be written for all to read and only those agreed to would be transferred to the report.

8. The facilitator is to inform the participants that they would have the opportunity to review the relevant section of the report for accuracy and request amendments before agreeing with its inclusion.

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